

*BELL'S ENGLISH TEXTS*

GENERAL EDITOR    A. GUTHKELCH

LAMB'S ESSAYS & LETTERS

in 1800

14 1/2 Mile



## After Herwood

# CHARLES LAMB

## *Essays and Letters*

SELECTED AND EDITED BY  
A. GUTHKELCH



LONDON  
G. BELL AND SONS, LTD.

1924

First published 1906.  
Reprinted 1914, 1916, 1919, 1924.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY ROBERT MACLEHOSE AND CO. LTD,  
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, GLASGOW

## NOTE

THIS little book consists of ten of the Essays, sixteen of the Letters, and one or two minor productions of Charles Lamb, arranged (with short introductions) so as to form a more or less connected account of his life.

By the kind permission of Messrs. Methuen & Co., the text is that of Mr. E. V. Lucas' collected edition of the Works of Charles and Mary Lamb, with the exception of the two letters on pages 104 to 109, which are printed from Mr. Hazlitt's edition. Some small omissions and alterations only have been made.

The present editor has filled in the blanks left by Lamb in some of the proper names, *e.g.*, the name which Lamb printed as "T——e" appears as "T[rollop]e" in this edition. This has only been done at the first occurrence of the name. In subsequent cases Lamb's spelling is left unaltered.

Some brief notes are given at pp. 140 to 146; a list of references to the more important quotations which have been identified, at pp. 147 to 152; and a sketch-map of London in 1800, at the beginning of the book. On the map are marked the places and buildings in London to which Lamb refers in the Essays and Letters printed in this volume.

The date of each Essay and Letter is given, and should be noticed carefully by the reader, as in many cases it throws light upon the text.

A. G.

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. <i>BIRTH AND EARLY CHILDHOOD,</i> . . . . .	1
THE OLD BENCHERS OF THE INNER TEMPLE, . . . . .	2
II. <i>SCHOOLDAYS,</i> . . . . .	17
CAPTAIN STARKEY, . . . . .	17
CHRIST'S HOSPITAL FIVE AND THIRTY YEARS AGO, . . . . .	22
III. <i>EARLY MANHOOD: MARY LAMB,</i> . . . . .	39
LETTER TO COLERIDGE, SEPT. 27, 1796, . . . . .	40
MACKERY END IN HERTFORDSHIRE, . . . . .	42
DREAM CHILDREN; A REVERIE . . . . .	48
IV. <i>A CLERK I WAS IN LONDON GAY,</i> . . . . .	54
LETTER TO WORDSWORTH, JAN. 30, 1801, . . . . .	54
LETTER TO MANNING, FEB. 24, 1805, . . . . .	56
LETTER TO COLERIDGE, MARCH 9, 1822, . . . . .	59
A DISSERTATION UPON ROAST PIG, . . . . .	61
MY FIRST PLAY, . . . . .	70
BARBARA S——, . . . . .	76
OLD CHINA, . . . . .	83

	PAGE
V. <i>FRIENDS: DYER, MANNING,</i> . . . .	91
LETTER TO MANNING, AUGUST 24, 1800, . . . .	91
LETTER TO MANNING, DEC. 27, 1800, . . . .	94
LETTER TO MRS. HAZLITT, NOV. 1823, . . . .	97
AMICUS REDIVIVUS, . . . . .	98
LETTER TO MANNING, FEB. 19, 1803, . . . .	104
LETTER TO MANNING, MAY 10, 1806, . . . .	107
LETTER TO MANNING, DEC. 25, 1815, . . . .	109
LETTER TO MANNING, DEC. 26, 1815, . . . .	112
VI. <i>RETIREMENT AND DEATH,</i> . . . .	115
LETTER TO MANNING, 7 FEB. 1825, . . . .	115
LETTER TO WORDSWORTH, APRIL 6, 1825, . . . .	116
THE SUPERANNUATED MAN, . . . .	118
LETTER TO WORDSWORTH, JAN. 22, 1830, . . . .	128
LETTER TO P. G. PATMORE, SEPT. 1827, . . . .	133
THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES, . . . .	136
LETTER TO MRS. DYER, DEC. 22, 1834, . . . .	137
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH, . . . .	138
NOTES, . . . . .	140
QUOTATIONS, ETC., . . . . .	147
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE, . . . . .	152

# CHARLES LAMB

## *SELECTED ESSAYS AND LETTERS*

### I

#### BIRTH AND EARLY CHILDHOOD

CHARLES LAMB was so fond of writing about himself and his friends, his pleasures and his sorrows, that it is easy to put together from his letters and essays a sort of informal "Autobiography of Charles Lamb." In work intended for publication he usually changed or disguised names and dates, partly to avoid the unpleasantness which might result from taking the outer world thus into his confidence, and partly, perhaps, to gratify his mischievous delight in puzzling his acquaintances : but most of his mystifications have long ceased to deceive, and the desire to shield him or his friends from impertinent curiosity is no longer felt for one who has lain these seventy years in Edmonton Churchyard. We know now the full history of his life of quiet heroic sacrifice, and unwearying love, and there is for us a deeper meaning and fuller interest in his writings than for any of his contemporaries, except those who knew him most intimately, for we can see how much of his own life Lamb put into everything he wrote.

Born at No. 2 Crown Office Row, in the Temple (see map) on February 10th, 1775, Charles Lamb was the son of John Lamb (he is called Lovel in

the following Essay), clerk, servant, and confidential adviser to Samuel Salt, a Bencher of the Inner Temple and for some time a Member of Parliament. Lamb had six brothers and sisters, only two of whom survived their childhood—John Lamb, twelve years, and Mary Lamb, ten years his senior.

The following is one of the *Essays of Elia* (first published in a collected edition in 1823), and appeared in the *London Magazine* for September, 1821.

### THE OLD BENCHERS OF THE INNER TEMPLE

I WAS born, and passed the first seven years of my life, in the Temple. Its church, its halls, its gardens, its fountains, its river, I had almost said—for in those young years, what was this king of rivers to me but a stream that watered our pleasant places?—these are of my oldest recollections. I repeat, to this day, no verses to myself more frequently, or with kindlier emotion, than those of Spenser, where he speaks of this spot :

There when they came, whereas those bricky towers,  
The which on Themmes brode aged back doth ride,  
Where now the studious lawyers have their bowers,  
There whylome wont the Templer knights to hide,  
Till they decayd through pride.

Indeed, it is the most elegant spot in the metropolis. What a transition for a countryman visiting London for the first time—the passing from the crowded Strand or Fleet Street, by unexpected avenues, into its magnificent ample squares, its classic green recesses! What a cheerful, liberal look hath that portion of it, which, from three sides, overlooks the greater garden : that goodly pile

Of building strong, albeit of Paper hight,

confronting, with massy contrast, the lighter, older, more fantastically shrouded one, named of Harcourt, with the cheerful Crown-Office Row (place of my kindly engendure), right opposite the stately stream, which washes the garden-foot with her yet scarcely trade-polluted waters, and seems but just weaned from her Twickenham Naiades! a man would give something to have been born in such places. What a collegiate aspect has that fine Elizabethan hall, where the fountain plays, which I have made to rise and fall, how many times! to the astoundment of the young urchins, my contemporaries, who, not being able to guess at its recondite machinery, were almost tempted to hail the wondrous work as magic! What an antique air had the now almost effaced sun-dials, with their moral inscriptions, seeming coevals with that Time which they measured, and to take their revelations of its flight immediately from heaven, holding correspondence with the fountain of light! How would the dark line steal imperceptibly on, watched by the eye of childhood, eager to detect its movement, never caught, nice as an evanescent cloud, or the first arrests of sleep!

Ah! yet doth beauty like a dial-hand  
Steal from his figure, and no pace perceived!

What a dead thing is a clock, with its ponderous embowelments of lead and brass, its pert or solemn dulness of communication, compared with the simple altar-like structure and silent heart-language of the old dial! It stood as the garden god of Christian gardens. Why is it almost every where vanished? If its business-use be superseded by more elaborate inventions, its moral uses, its beauty, might have

pleaded for its continuance. It spoke of moderate labours, of pleasures not protracted after sunset, of temperance, and good-hours. It was the primitive clock, the horologe of the first world. Adam could scarce have missed it in Paradise. It was the measure appropriate for sweet plants and flowers to spring by, for the birds to apportion their silver warblings by, for flocks to pasture and be led to fold by. The shepherd "carved it out quaintly in the sun;" and, turning philosopher by the very occupation, provided it with mottos more touching than tombstones. It was a pretty device of the gardener, recorded by Marvell; who, in the days of artificial gardening, made a dial out of herbs and flowers. I must quote his verses a little higher up, for they are full, as all his serious poetry was, of a witty delicacy. They will not come in awkwardly, I hope, in a talk of fountains and sundials. He is speaking of sweet garden scenes :

What wondrous life in this I lead !  
 Ripe apples drop about my head.  
 The luscious clusters of the vine  
 Upon my mouth do crush their wine.  
 The nectarine, and curious peach,  
 Into my hands themselves do reach.  
 Stumbling on melons, as I pass,  
 Insnares with flowers, I fall on grass.  
 Meanwhile the mind from pleasure less  
 Withdraws into its happiness.  
 The mind, that ocean, where each kind  
 Does straight its own resemblance find ;  
 Yet it creates, transcending these,  
 Far other worlds and other seas ;  
 Annihilating all that's made  
 To a green thought in a green shade.  
 Here at the fountain's sliding foot,  
 Or at some fruit-tree's mossy root,  
 Casting the body's vest aside,  
 My soul into the boughs does glide :

There, like a bird, it sits and sings,  
Then whets and claps its silver wings;  
And, till prepared for longer flight,  
Waves in its plumes the various light.  
How well the skilful gardener drew,  
Of flowers and herbs, this dial new!  
Where, from above, the milder sun  
Does through a fragrant zodiac run:  
And, as it works, the industrious bee  
Computes its time as well as we.  
How could such sweet and wholesome hours  
Be reckon'd, but with herbs and flowers?<sup>1</sup>

The artificial fountains of the metropolis are, in like manner, fast vanishing. Most of them are dried up, or bricked over. Yet, where one is left, as in that little green nook behind the South Sea House, what a freshness it gives to the dreary pile! Four little winged marble boys used to play their virgin fancies, spouting out ever fresh streams from their innocent-wanton lips in the square of Lincoln's-inn, when I was no bigger than they were figured. They are gone, and the spring choked up. The fashion, they tell me, is gone by, and these things are esteemed childish. Why not then gratify children, by letting them stand? Lawyers, I suppose, were children once. They are awakening images to them at least. Why must everything smack of man, and mannish? Is the world all grown up? Is childhood dead? Or is there not in the bosoms of the wisest and the best some of the child's heart left, to respond to its earliest enchantments? The figures were grotesque. Are the stiff-wigged living figures, that still flitter and chatter about that area, less gothic in appearance? or is the splutter of their hot rhetoric one half so refreshing and innocent as the little cool playful streams those exploded cherubs uttered?

<sup>1</sup> From a copy of verses entitled *The Garden*.

They have lately gothicised the entrance to the Inner Temple-hall, and the library front, to assimilate them, I suppose, to the body of the hall, which they do not at all resemble. What is become of the winged horse that stood over the former? a stately arms! and who has removed those fre-coss of the Virtues, which Italianized the end of the Paper-buildings?—my first hint of allegory! They must account to me for these things, which I miss so greatly.

The terrace is, indeed, left, which we used to call the parade; but the traces are passed away of the footsteps which made its pavement awful! It is become common and profane. The old benchers had it almost sacred to themselves, in the forepart of the day at least. They might not be sided or jostled. Their air and dress asserted the parade. You left wide spaces betwixt you, when you passed them. We walk on even terms with their successors. The roguish eye of J[eky]ll, ever ready to be delivered of a jest, almost invites a stranger to vie a repartee with it. But what insolent familiar durst have mated Thomas Coventry?—whose person was a quadrate, his step massy and elephantine, his face square as the lion's, his gait peremptory and path-keeping, indivertible from his way as a moving column, the scarecrow of his inferiors, the brow-beater of equals and superiors, who made a solitude of children wherever he came, for they fled his insufferable presence, as they would have shunned an Elisha bear. His growl was as thunder in their ears, whether he spake to them in mirth or in rebuke, his invitatory notes being, indeed, of all, the most repulsive and horrid. Clouds of snuff, aggravating the natural terrors of his speech, broke from each majestic nostril, darkening the air. He took

it, not by pinches, but a palmful at once, diving for it under the mighty flaps of his old-fashioned waistcoat pocket; his waistcoat red and angry, his coat dark rappee, tintured by dye original, and by adjuncts, with buttons of obsolete gold. And so he paced the terrace.

By his side a milder form was sometimes to be seen; the pensive gentility of Samuel Salt. They were coevals, and had nothing but that and their benchership in common. In politics Salt was a whig, and Coventry a staunch tory. Many a sarcastic growl did the latter cast out—for Coventry had a rough spinous humour—at the political confederates of his associate, which rebounded from the gentle bosom of the latter like cannon-balls from wool. You could not ruffle Samuel Salt.

S. had the reputation of being a very clever man, and of excellent discernment in the chamber practice of the law. I suspect his knowledge did not amount to much. When a case of difficult disposition of money, testamentary or otherwise, came before him, he ordinarily handed it over with a few instructions to his man Lovel, who was a quick little fellow, and would despatch it out of hand by the light of natural understanding, of which he had an uncommon share. It was incredible what repute for talents S. enjoyed by the mere trick of gravity. He was a shy man; a child might pose him in a minute—indolent and procrastinating to the last degree. Yet men would give him credit for vast application in spite of himself. He was not to be trusted with himself with impunity. He never dressed for a dinner party but he forgot his sword—they wore swords then—or some other necessary part of his equipage. Lovel had his eye

upon him on all these occasions, and ordinarily gave him his cue. If there was anything which he could speak unseasonably, he was sure to do it.—He was to dine at a relative's of the unfortunate Miss Blandy on the day of her execution;—and L. who had a wary foresight of his probable hallucinations, before he set out, schooled him, with great anxiety not in any possible manner to allude to her story that day. S. promised faithfully to observe the injunction. He had not been seated in the parlour, where the company was expecting the dinner summons, four minutes, when, a pause in the conversation ensuing, he got up, looked out of window, and pulling down his ruffles—an ordinary motion with him—observed, “it was a gloomy day,” and added, “Miss Blandy must be hanged by this time, I suppose.” Instances of this sort were perpetual. Yet S. was thought by some of the greatest men of his time a fit person to be consulted, not alone in matters pertaining to the law, but in the ordinary niceties and embarrassments of conduct—from force of manner entirely. He never laughed. He had the same good fortune among the female world,—was a known toast with the ladies, and one or two are said to have died for love of him —I suppose, because he never trifled or talked gallantry with them, or paid them, indeed, hardly common attentions. He had a fine face and person, but wanted, methought, the spirit that should have shown them off with advantage to the women. His eye lacked lustre.—Not so, thought Susan P[iersen]; who, at the advanced age of sixty, was seen, in the cold evening, time, unaccompanied, wetting the pavement of B[edford] Row, with tears that fell in drops which might be heard, because her friend had died

that day—he, whom she had pursued with a hopeless passion for the last forty years—a passion, which years could not extinguish or abate; nor the long resolved, yet gently enforced, puttings off of unrelenting bachelorhood dissuade from its cherished purpose. Mild Susan P——, thou hast now thy friend in heaven!

Thomas Coventry was a cadet of the noble family of that name. He passed his youth in contracted circumstances, which gave him early those parsimonious habits which in after-life never forsook him; so that, with one windfall or another, about the time I knew him he was master of four or five hundred thousand pounds; nor did he look, or walk, worth a moidore less. He lived in a gloomy house opposite the pump in Serjeant's-inn, Fleet-street. J., the counsel, is doing self-imposed penance in it, for what reason I divine not, at this day. C. had an agreeable seat at North Cray, where he seldom spent above a day or two at a time in the summer; but preferred, during the hot months, standing at his window in this damp, close, well-like mansion, to watch, as he said, "the maids drawing water all day long." I suspect he had his within-door reasons for the preference. *Hic currus et arma fuere.* He might think his treasures more safe. His house had the aspect of a strong box. C. was a close hunk—a hoarder rather than a miser—or, if a miser, none of the mad Elwes breed, who have brought discredit upon a character, which cannot exist without certain admirable points of steadiness and unity of purpose. One may hate a true miser, but cannot, I suspect, so easily despise him. By taking care of the pence, he is often enabled to part with the pounds, upon a scale that leaves

us careless generous fellows halting at an immeasurable distance behind. C. gave away 30,000*l.* at once in his life-time to a blind charity. His house-keeping was severely looked after, but he kept the table of a gentleman. He would know who came in and who went out of his house, but his kitchen chimney was never suffered to freeze.

Salt was his opposite in this, as in all—never knew what he was worth in the world; and having but a competency for his rank, which his indolent habits were little calculated to improve, might have suffered severely if he had not had honest people about him. Lovel took care of every thing. He was at once his clerk, his good servant, his dresser, his friend, his "flapper," his guide, stop-watch, auditor, treasurer. He did nothing without consulting Lovel, or failed in anything without expecting and fearing his admonishing. He put himself almost too much in his hands, had they not been the purest in the world. He resigned his title almost to respect as a master, if L. could ever have forgotten for a moment that he was a servant.

I knew this Lovel. He was a man of an incorrigible and losing honesty. A good fellow withal, and "would strike." In the cause of the oppressed he never considered inequalities, or calculated the number of his opponents. He once wrested a sword out of the hand of a man of quality that had drawn upon him; and pommelled him severely with the hilt of it. The swordsman had offered insult to a female—an occasion upon which no odds against him could have prevented the interference of Lovel. He would stand next day bare-headed to the same person modestly to excuse his interference—for L. never forgot rank, where something better was not concerned. L. was the

us careless generous fellows  
 able distance behind. C. ga  
 in his life-time to a blind cha  
 was severely looked after, b  
 gentleman. He would know  
 went out of his house, but  
 never suffered to freeze.

Salt was his opposite in thi  
 what he was worth in the w  
 competency for his rank, whi  
 were little calculated to impro  
 severely if he had not had ho  
 Lovel took care of every thing,  
 clerk, his good servant, his d  
 "flapper," his guide, stop-wat  
 He did nothing without consulti  
 anything without expecting and  
 ing. He put himself almost too  
 had they not been the purest in th  
 his title almost to respect as a m  
 have forgotten for a moment tha

I knew this Lovel. He was a r  
 and losing honesty. A good  
 "would strike." In the cause o  
 never considered inequalities, or c  
 of his opponents. He once wrest  
 the hand of a man of quality th  
 him; and pommelled him severely  
 The swordsman had offered insul  
 occasion upon which no odds again  
 prevented the interference of Lovel.  
 next day bare-headed to the same p  
 excuse his interference—for L. never  
 something better was not concern

date) and his singular gait, which was performed by three steps and a jump regularly succeeding. The steps were little efforts, like that of a child beginning to walk; the jump comparatively vigorous, as a foot to an inch. Where he learned this figure, or what occasioned it, I could never discover. It was neither graceful in itself, nor seemed to answer the purpose any better than common walking. The extreme tenuity of his frame, I suspect, set him upon it. It was a trial of poisoning. Twopenny would often rally him upon his leanness, and hail him as Brother Lusty; but W. had no relish of a joke. His features were spiteful. I have heard that he would pinch his cat's ears extremely, when anything had offended him. Jackson—the omniscient Jackson he was called—was of this period. He had the reputation of possessing more multifarious knowledge than any man of his time. He was the Friar Bacon of the less literate portion of the Temple. I remember a pleasant passage, of the cook applying to him, with much formality of apology, for instructions how to write down *edge bone* of beef in his bill of commons. He was supposed to know, if any man in the world did. He decided the orthography to be—as I have given it—fortifying his authority with such anatomical reasons as dismissed the manciple (for the time) learned and happy. Some do spell it yet perversely, *aitch bone*, from a fanciful resemblance between its shape, and that of the aspirate so denominated. I had almost forgotten Mingay with the iron hand—but he was somewhat later. He had lost his right hand by some accident, and supplied it with a grappling hook, which he wielded with a tolerable adroitness. I detected the substitute, before I was old enough to reason whether it were artificial

the terrace, most commonly Peter Pierson would join, to make up a third. They did not walk linked arm in arm in those days—"as now our stout triumvirs sweep the streets,"—but generally with both hands folded behind them for state, or with one at least behind, the other carrying a cane. P. was a benevolent, but not a prepossessing man. He had that in his face which you could not term unhappiness; it rather implied an incapacity of being happy. His cheeks were colourless, even to whiteness. His look was uninviting, resembling (but without his sourness) that of our great philanthropist. I know that he *did* good acts, but I could never make out what he was. Contemporary with these, but subordinate, was Daines Barrington—another oddity—he walked burly and square—in imitation, I think, of Coventry—howbeit he attained not to the dignity of his prototype. Nevertheless, he did pretty well, upon the strength of being a tolerable antiquarian, and having a brother a bishop. When the account of his year's treasurership came to be audited, the following singular charge was unanimously disallowed by the bench: "Item, disbursed Mr. Allen, the gardener, twenty shillings, for stuff to poison the sparrows, by my orders." Next to him was old Barton—a jolly negation, who took upon him the ordering of the bills of fare for the parliament chamber, where the benchers dine—answering to the combination rooms at College—much to the easement of his less epicurean brethren. I know nothing more of him.—Then Read, and Twopenny—Read, good-humoured and personable—Twopenny, good-humoured, but thin, and felicitous in jests upon his own figure. If T. was thin, Wharry was attenuated and fleeting. Many must remember him (for he was rather of later

date) and his singular gait, which was performed by three steps and a jump regularly succeeding. The steps were little efforts, like that of a child beginning to walk; the jump comparatively vigorous, as a foot to an inch. Where he learned this figure, or what occasioned it, I could never discover. It was neither graceful in itself, nor seemed to answer the purpose any better than common walking. The extreme tenuity of his frame, I suspect, set him upon it. It was a trial of poising. Twopenny would often rally him upon his leanness, and hail him as Brother Lusty; but W. had no relish of a joke. His features were spiteful. I have heard that he would pinch his cat's ears extremely, when anything had offended him. Jackson—the omniscient Jackson he was called—was of this period. He had the reputation of possessing more multifarious knowledge than any man of his time. He was the Friar Bacon of the less literate portion of the Temple. I remember a pleasant passage, of the cook applying to him, with much formality of apology, for instructions how to write down *edge bone* of beef in his bill of commons. He was supposed to know, if any man in the world did. He decided the orthography to be—as I have given it—fortifying his authority with such anatomical reasons as dismissed the manciple (for the time) learned and happy. Some do spell it yet perversely, *aitch bone*, from a fanciful resemblance between its shape, and that of the aspirate so denominated. I had almost forgotten Mingay with the iron hand—but he was somewhat later. He had lost his right hand by some accident, and supplied it with a grappling hook, which he wielded with a tolerable adroitness. I detected the substitute, before I was old enough to reason whether it were artificial

or not. I remember the astonishment it raised in me. He was a blustering, loud-talking person; and I reconciled the phenomenon to my ideas as an emblem of power—somewhat like the horns in the forehead of Michael Angelo's Moses. Baron Maseres, who walks (or did till very lately) in the costume of the reign of George the Second, closes my imperfect recollections of the old benchers of the Inner Temple.

Fantastic forms, whither are ye fled? Or, if the like of you exist, why exist they no more for me? Ye inexplicable, half-understood appearances, why comes in reason to tear away the preternatural mist, bright or gloomy, that enshrouded you? Why make ye so sorry a figure in my relation, who made up to me—to my childish eyes—the mythology of the Temple? In those days I saw Gods, as "old men covered with a mantle," walking upon the earth. Let the dream of classic idolatry perish,—extinct be the fairies and fairy trumpery of legendary fabling,—in the heart of childhood there will, for ever, spring up a well of innocent or wholesome superstition—the seeds of exaggeration will be busy there, and vital—from every-day forms educing the unknown and the uncommon. In that little Goshen there will be light, when the grown world flounders about in the darkness of sense and materiality. While childhood, and while dreams, reducing childhood, shall be left, imagination shall not have spread her holy wings totally to fly the earth.

P.S.—I have done injustice to the soft shade of Samuel Salt. See what it is to trust to imperfect memory, and the erring notices of childhood! Yet I protest I always thought that he had been a bachelor!

This gentleman, R. N. informs me, married young, and losing his lady in child-bed, within the first year of their union, fell into a deep melancholy, from the effects of which, probably, he never thoroughly recovered. In what a new light does this place his rejection (O call it by a gentler name!) of mild Susan P——, unravelling into beauty certain peculiarities of this very shy and retiring character!—Henceforth let no one receive the narratives of Elia for true records! They are, in truth, but shadows of fact—verisimilitudes, not verities—or sitting but upon the remote edges and outskirts of history. He is no such honest chronicler as R. N., and would have done better perhaps to have consulted that gentleman, before he sent these incondite reminiscences to press. But the worthy sub-treasurer—who respects his old and his new masters—would but have been puzzled at the indecorous liberties of Elia. The good man wots not, peradventure, of the licence which *Magazines* have arrived at in this plain-speaking age, or hardly dreams of their existence, beyond the *Gentleman's*—his furthest monthly excursions in this nature having been long confined to the holy ground of honest *Urban's* obituary. May it be long before his own name shall help to swell those columns of unenvied flattery!—Meantime, O ye New Benchers of the Inner Temple, cherish him kindly, for he is himself the kindest of human creatures. Should infirmities over-take him—he is yet in green and vigorous senility—make allowances for them, remembering that “ye yourselves are old.” So may the Winged Horse, your ancient badge and cognisance, still flourish! so may future Hookers and Seldens illustrate your church and chambers! so may the sparrows, in default of more melodious quiristers,

unpoisoned hop about your walks! so may the fresh-coloured and cleanly nursery maid, who, by leave, airs her playful charge in your stately gardens, drop her prettiest blushing curtesy as ye pass, reductive of juvenescent emotion! so may the youngers of this generation eye you, pacing your stately terrace, with the same superstitious veneration, with which the child Elia gazed on the Old Worthies that solemnized the parade before ye!

## II

### SCHOOLDAYS

LAMB described his and his sister's first school and schoolmasters in the *Every-Day Book* of his friend Hone. The article appeared on July 21, 1825. A picture of Starkey (by Thomas Ranson) had appeared in the same publication for July 9, 1825, together with extracts from his autobiography.

### CAPTAIN STARKEY

*To the Editor of the Every-Day Book.*

DEAR SIR,—I read your account of this unfortunate Being, and his forlorn piece of self-history, with that smile of half-interest which the *Annals of Insignificance* excite, till I came to where he says "I was bound apprentice to Mr. William Bird, an eminent writer and Teacher of languages and Mathematics," &c.—when I started as one does on the recognition of an old acquaintance in a supposed stranger. This then was that Starkey of whom I have heard my Sister relate so many pleasant anecdotes; and whom, never having seen, I yet seem almost to remember. For nearly fifty years she had lost all sight of him—and behold the gentle Usher of her youth, grown into an aged Beggar, dubbed with an opprobrious title, to which he had no pretensions; an object, and a May game! To what base purposes may we not return! What may not have been the meek creature's suffer-

ings—what his wanderings—before he finally settled down in the comparative comfort of an old Hospitaller of the Almonry of Newcastle? And is poor Starkey dead?—

I was a scholar of that “eminent writer” that he speaks of; but Starkey had quitted the school about a year before I came to it. Still the odour of his merits had left a fragrancy upon the recollection of the elder pupils. The school-room stands where it did, looking into a discoloured dingy garden in the passage leading from Fetter Lane into Bartlett’s Buildings. It is still a School, though the main prop, alas! has fallen so ingloriously; and bears a Latin inscription over the entrance in the Lane, which was unknown in our humbler times. Heaven knows what “languages” were taught in it then; I am sure that neither my Sister nor myself brought any out of it, but a little of our native English. By “mathematics,” reader, must be understood “cyphering.” It was in fact a humble day-school, at which reading and writing were taught to us boys in the morning, and the same slender erudition was communicated to the girls, our sisters, &c. in the evening. Now Starkey presided, under Bird, over both establishments. In my time, Mr. Cook, now or lately a respectable Singer and Performer at Drury-lane Theatre, and Nephew to Mr. Bird, had succeeded to him. I well remember Bird. He was a squat, corpulent, middle-sized man, with something of the gentleman about him, and that peculiar mild tone—especially while he was inflicting punishment—which is so much more terrible to children, than the angriest looks and gestures. Whippings were not frequent; but when they took place, the correction was performed in a private room adjoining.

ing, whence we could only hear the complaints, but saw nothing. This heightened the decorum and the solemnity. But the ordinary public chastisement was the bastinado, a stroke or two on the palm with that almost obsolete weapon now—the ferule. A ferule was a sort of flat ruler, widened at the inflicting end into a shape resembling a pear,—but nothing like so sweet—with a delectable hole in the middle, to raise blisters, like a cupping-glass. I have an intense recollection of that disused instrument of torture—and the malignancy, in proportion to the apparent mildness, with which its strokes were applied. The idea of a rod is accompanied with something ludicrous; but by no process can I look back upon this blister-raiser with anything but unmingled horror.—To make him look more formidable—if a pedagogue had need of these heightenings—Bird wore one of those flowered Indian gowns, formerly in use with schoolmasters; the strange figures upon which we used to interpret into hieroglyphics of pain and suffering. But boyish fears apart—Bird I believe was in the main a humane and judicious master.

O, how I remember our legs wedged in to those uncomfortable sloping desks, where we sat elbowing each other—and the injunctions to attain a free hand, unattainable in that position; the first copy I wrote after, with its moral lesson “Art improves Nature;” the still earlier pothooks and the hangers some traces of which I fear may yet be apparent in this manuscript; the truant looks side-long to the garden, which seemed a mockery of our imprisonment; the prize for best spelling, which had almost turned my head, and which to this day, I cannot reflect upon without a vanity, which I ought to be ashamed of—our little leaden ink-

stands, not separately subsisting, but sunk into the desks; the bright, punctually-washed morning fingers, darkening gradually with another and another ink-spot: what a world of little associated circumstances, pains and pleasures mingling their quotas of pleasure, arise at the reading of those few simple words—"Mr. William Bird, an eminent Writer and Teacher of languages and mathematics, in Fetter Lane, Holborn!"

Poor Starkey, when young, had that peculiar stamp of old-fashionedness in his face, which makes it impossible for a beholder to predicate any particular age in the object. You can scarce make a guess between seventeen and seven and thirty. This antique cast always seems to promise ill-luck and penury. Yet it seems, he was not always the abject thing he came to. My Sister, who well remembers him, can hardly forgive Mr. Thomas Ranson for making an etching so unlike her idea of him, when he was a youthful teacher at Mr. Bird's school. Old age and poverty—a life-long poverty she thinks, could at no time have so effaced the marks of native gentility, which were once so visible in a face, otherwise strikingly ugly, thin, and careworn. From her recollections of him, she thinks that he would have wanted bread, before he would have begged or borrowed a halfpenny. If any of the girls (she says) who were my school-fellows should be reading, through their aged spectacles, tidings from the dead of their youthful friend Starkey, they will feel a pang, as I do, at ever having teased his gentle spirit. They were big girls, it seems, too old to attend his instructions with the silence necessary; and however old age, and a long state of beggary seem to have reduced his writing faculties to a state of

imbecility, in those days, his language occasionally rose to the bold and figurative, for when he was in despair to stop their chattering, his ordinary phrase was, "Ladies, if you will not hold your peace, not all the powers in heaven can make you." Once he was missing for a day or two; he had run away. A little old unhappy-looking man brought him back—it was his father—and he did no business in the school that day, but sat moping in a corner, with his hands before his face; and the girls, his tormentors, in pity for his case, for the rest of that day forbore to annoy him. I had been there but a few months (adds she) when Starkey, who was the chief instructor of us girls, communicated to us as a profound secret, that the tragedy of "Cato" was shortly to be acted by the elder boys, and that we were to be invited to the representation. That Starkey lent a helping hand in fashioning the actors, she remembers; and but for his unfortunate person, he might have had some distinguished part in the scene to enact; as it was, he had the arduous task of prompter assigned to him, and his feeble voice was heard clear and distinct, repeating the text during the whole performance. She describes her recollection of the cast of characters even now with a relish. Martia, by the handsome Edgar Hickman, who afterwards went to Africa, and of whom she never afterwards heard tidings,—Lucia, by Master Walker, whose sister was her particular friend; Cato, by John Hunter, a masterly declaimer, but a plain boy, and shorter by the head than his two sons in the scene, &c. In conclusion, Starkey appears to have been one of those mild spirits, which, not originally deficient in understanding, are crushed by penury into dejection and feebleness. He might have proved a

useful adjunct, if not an ornament to Society, if Fortune had taken him into a very little fostering, but wanting that, he became a Captain—a by-word—and lived, and died, a broken bulrush.

---

From the school of Mr. Bird, Lamb went in 1782 to Christ's Hospital, on the nomination of one of the governors, named Yeats, who was in all probability a friend of Samuel Salt. Lamb left in 1789, and subsequently wrote two different accounts of his life at Christ's. The first (*Recollections of Christ's Hospital*) appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for June, 1813, and was reprinted in the *Works of Charles Lamb* (published in 1818): the second account is given here. It appeared in the *London Magazine* for November, 1820, and in the collected *Essays of Elia*. Lamb wrote this Essay as if he were Coleridge, though at the end the disguise is dropped. "I" then stands for Coleridge, though Lamb is writing.

#### CHRIST'S HOSPITAL FIVE AND THIRTY YEARS AGO

IN Mr. Lamb's "Works," published a year or two since, I find a magnificent eulogy on my old school,<sup>1</sup> such as it was, or now appears to him to have been, between the years 1782 and 1789. It happens, very oddly, that my own standing at Christ's was nearly corresponding with his; and, with all gratitude to him for his enthusiasm for the cloisters, I think he has contrived to bring together whatever can be said in praise of them, dropping all the other side of the argument most ingeniously.

<sup>1</sup> *Recollections of Christ's Hospital.*

I remember L. at school; and can well recollect that he had some peculiar advantages, which I and others of his schoolfellows had not. His friends lived in town, and were near at hand; and he had the privilege of going to see them, almost as often as he wished, through some invidious distinction, which was denied to us. The present worthy sub-treasurer to the Inner Temple can explain how that happened. He had his tea and hot rolls in a morning, while we were batten-ing upon our quarter of a penny loaf—our *crug*—moistened with attenuated small beer, in wooden piggins, smacking of the pitched leathern jaek it was poured from. Our Monday's milk porritch, blue and tasteless, and the pease soup of Saturday, coarse and choking, were enriched for him with a slice of "extra-ordinary bread and butter," from the hot-loaf of the Temple. The Wednesday's mess of millet, somewhat less repugnant—(we had three banyan to four meat days in the week)—was endeared to his palate with a lump of double-refined, and a smack of ginger (to make it go down the more glibly) or the fragrant cinnamon. In lieu of our *half-pickled* Sundays, or *quite fresh* boiled beef on Thursdays (strong as *caro equina*), with detestable marigolds floating in the pail to poison the broth—our scanty mutton erags on Fridays—and rather more savoury, but grudging, portions of the same flesh, rotten-roasted or rare, on the Tuesdays (the only dish which excited our appetites, and disappointed our stomachs, in almost equal proportion)—he had his hot plate of roast veal, or the more tempting griskin (exotics unknown to our palates), cooked in the paternal kitchen (a great thing), and brought him daily by his maid or aunt! I remember the good old relative (in whom love forbade

pride) squatting down upon some odd stone in a by-nook of the cloisters, disclosing the viands (of higher regale than those eates which the ravens ministered to the Tishbite); and the contending passions of L. at the unfolding. There was love for the bringer; shame for the thing brought, and the manner of its bringing; sympathy for those who were too many to share in it; and, at top of all, hunger (eldest, strongest of the passions!) predominant, breaking down the stony fences of shame, and awkwardness, and a troubling over-consciousness.

I was a poor friendless boy. My parents, and those who should care for me, were far away. Those few acquaintances of theirs, which they could reckon upon being kind to me in the great city, after a little forced notice, which they had the grace to take of me on my first arrival in town, soon grew tired of my holiday visits. They seemed to them to recur too often, though I thought them few enough; and, one after another, they all failed me, and I felt myself alone among six hundred playmates.

O the cruelty of separating a poor lad from his early homestead! The yearnings which I used to have towards it in those unfledged years! How, in my dreams, would my native town (far in the west) come back, with its church, and trees, and faces! How I would wake weeping, and in the anguish of my heart exclaim upon sweet Calne in Wiltshire!

To this late hour of my life, I trace impressions left by the recollection of those friendless holidays. The long warm days of summer never return but they bring with them a gloom from the haunting memory of those *whole-day-leaves*, when, by some strange arrangement, we were turned out, for the live-long

day, upon our own hands, whether we had friends to go to, or none. I remember those bathing-excursions to the New-River, which L. recalls with such relish, better, I think, than he can—for he was a home-seeking lad, and did not much care for such water-pastimes:—How merrily we would sally forth into the fields; and strip under the first warmth of the sun; and wanton like young dace in the streams; getting us appetites for noon, which those of us that were penniless (our scanty morning crust long since exhausted) had not the means of allaying—while the cattle, and the birds, and the fishes, were at feed about us, and we had nothing to satisfy our cravings—the very beauty of the day, and the exercise of the pastime, and the sense of liberty, setting a keener edge upon them!—How faint and languid, finally, we would return, towards nightfall, to our desired morsel, half-rejoicing, half-reluctant, that the hours of our uneasy liberty had expired!

It was worse in the days of winter, to go prowling about the streets objectless—shivering at cold windows of print shops, to extract a little amusement; or haply, as a last resort, in the hope of a little novelty, to pay a fifty-times repeated visit (where our individual faces should be as well known to the warden as those of his own charges) to the Lions in the Tower—to whose levée, by courtesy immemorial, we had a prescriptive title to admission.

L.'s governor (so we called the patron who presented us to the foundation) lived in a manner under his paternal roof. Any complaint which he had to make was sure of being attended to. This was understood at Christ's, and was an effectual screen to him against the severity of masters, or worse tyranny of the

monitors. The oppressions of these young brutes are heart-sickening to call to recollection. I have been called out of my bed, and *waked for the purpose*, in the coldest winter nights—and this not once, but night after night—in my shirt, to receive the discipline of a leathern thong, with eleven other sufferers, because it pleased my callow overseer, when there has been any talking heard after we were gone to bed, to make the six last beds in the dormitory, where the youngest children of us slept, answerable for an offence they neither dared to commit, nor had the power to hinder.—The same execrable tyranny drove the younger part of us from the fires, when our feet were perishing with snow; and, under the cruelest penalties, forbade the indulgence of a drink of water, when we lay in sleepless summer nights, fevered with the season, and the day's sports.

There was one H[odges], who, I learned, in after days, was seen expiating some maturer offence in the hulks. (Do I flatter myself in fancying that this might be the planter of that name, who suffered—at Nevis, I think, or St. Kitts,—some few years since? My friend Tobin was the benevolent instrument of bringing him to the gallows.) This petty Nero actually branded a boy, who had offended him, with a red-hot iron; and nearly starved forty of us, with exacting contributions, to the one half of our bread, to pamper a young ass, which, incredible as it may seem, with the connivance of the nurse's daughter (a young flame of his) he had contrived to smuggle in, and keep upon the leads of the *ward*, as they called our dormitories. This game went on for better than a week, till the foolish beast, not able to fare well but he must cry roast meat—happier than Caligula's minion, could he have kept his own

counsel—but, foolisher, alas! than any of his species in the fables—waxing fat, and kicking, in the fulness of bread, one unlucky minute would needs proclaim his good fortune to the world below; and, laying out his simple throat, blew such a ram's horn blast, as (toppling down the walls of his own Jericho) set concealment any longer at defiance. The client was dismissed, with certain attentions, to Smithfield; but I never understood that the patron underwent any censure on the occasion. This was in the stewardship of L.'s admired Perry.

Under the same *facile* administration, can L. have forgotten the cool impunity with which the nurses used to carry away openly, in open platters, for their own tables, one out of two of every hot joint, which the careful matron had been seeing scrupulously weighed out for our dinners? These things were daily practised in that magnificent apartment, which L. (grown connoisseur since, we presume) praises so highly for the grand paintings “by Verrio, and others,” with which it is “hung round and adorned. But the sight of sleek well-fed blue-coat boys in pictures was, at that time, I believe, little consolatory to him, or us, the living ones, who saw the better part of our provisions carried away before our faces by harpies; and ourselves reduced (with the Trojan in the hall of Dido)

To feed our mind with idle portraiture.

L. has recorded the repugnance of the school to *gags*, or the fat of fresh beef boiled; and sets it down to some superstition. But these unctuous morsels are never grateful to young palates (children are universally fat-haters), and in strong, coarse, boiled meats, *unsalted*, are detestable. A *gag-eater* in our time was

equivalent to a *goul*, and held in equal detestation. — suffered under the imputation.

—— 'Twas said  
He ate strange flesh.

He was observed, after dinner, carefully to gather up the remnants left at his table (not many, nor very choice fragments, you may credit me)—and, in an especial manner, these disreputable morsels, which he would convey away, and secretly stow in the settle that stood at his bedside. None saw when he ate them. It was rumoured that he privately devoured them in the night. He was watched, but no traces of such midnight practices were discoverable. Some reported, that, on leave-days, he had been seen to carry out of the bounds a large blue check handkerchief, full of something. This then must be the accursed thing. Conjecture next was at work to imagine how he could dispose of it. Some said he sold it to the beggars. This belief generally prevailed. He went about moping. None spake to him. No one would play with him. He was excommunicated; put out of the pale of the school. He was too powerful a boy to be beaten, but he underwent every mode of that negative punishment, which is more grievous than many stripes. Still he persevered. At length he was observed by two of his school-fellows, who were determined to get at the secret, and had traced him one leave-day for that purpose, to enter a large worn-out building, such as there exist specimens of in Chancery-lane, which are let out to various scales of pauperism with open door, and a common staircase. After him they silently slunk in, and followed by stealth up four flights, and saw him tap at a poor wicket, which was opened by an aged woman, meanly

clad. Suspicion was now ripened into certainty. The informers had secured their victim. They had him in their toils. Accusation was formally preferred, and retribution most signal was looked for. Mr. Hathaway, the then steward (for this happened a little after my time), with that patient sagacity which tempered all his conduct, determined to investigate the matter, before he proceeded to sentence. The result was, that the supposed mendicants, the receivers or purchasers of the mysterious scraps, turned out to be the parents of —, an honest couple come to decay,—whom this seasonable supply had, in all probability, saved from mendicancy; and that this young stork, at the expense of his own good name, had all this while been only feeding the old birds!—The governors on this occasion, much to their honour, voted a present relief to the family of —, and presented him with a silver medal. The lesson which the steward read upon RASH JUDGMENT, on the occasion of publicly delivering the medal to —, I believe, would not be lost upon his auditory.—I had left school then, but I well remember —. He was a tall, shambling youth, with a cast in his eye, not at all calculated to conciliate hostile prejudices. I have since seen him carrying a baker's basket. I think I heard he did not do quite so well by himself, as he had done by the old folks.

I was a hypochondriac lad; and the sight of a boy in fetters, upon the day of my first putting on the blue clothes, was not exactly fitted to assuage the natural terrors of initiation. I was of tender years, barely turned of seven; and had only read of such things in books, or seen them but in dreams. I was told he had *run away*. This was the punishment for the first offence.—As a novice I was soon after taken to see

the dungeons. These were little, square, Bedlam cells, where a boy could just lie at his length upon straw and a blanket—a mattress, I think, was afterwards substituted—with a peep of light, let in askance, from a prison-orifice at top, barely enough to read by. Here the poor boy was locked in by himself all day, without sight of any but the porter who brought him his bread and water—who *might not speak to him*;—or of the beadle, who came twice a week to call him out to receive his periodical chastisement, which was almost welcome, because it separated him for a brief interval from solitude:—and here he was shut up by himself *of nights*, out of the reach of any sound, to suffer whatever horrors the weak nerves, and superstition incident to his time of life, might subject him to. This was the penalty for the second offence. Wouldst thou like, reader, to see what became of him in the next degree?

The culprit, who had been a third time an offender, and whose expulsion was at this time deemed irreversible, was brought forth, as at some solemn *auto da fe*, arrayed in uncouth and most appalling attire—all trace of his late “watchet-weeds” carefully effaced, he was exposed in a jacket, resembling those which London lamplighters formerly delighted in, with a cap of the same. The effect of this divestiture was such as the ingenious devisers of it could have anticipated. With his pale and frightened features, it was as if some of those disfigurements in Dante had seized upon him. In this disguise he was brought into the hall (*L.’s favourite state-room*), where awaited him the whole number of his school-fellows, whose joint lessons and sports he was thenceforth to share no more; the awful presence of the steward, to be seen for the last

time; of the executioner beadle, clad in his state robe for the occasion; and of two faces more, of direr import, because never but in these extremities visible. These were governors; two of whom, by choice, or charter, were always accustomed to officiate at these *Ultima Supplicia*; not to mitigate (so at least we understood it), but to enforce the uttermost stripe. Old Bamber Gascoigne, and Peter Aubert, I remember, were colleagues on one occasion, when the beadle turning rather pale, a glass of brandy was ordered to prepare him for the mysteries. The scourging was, after the old Roman fashion, long and stately. The lictor accompanied the criminal quite round the hall. We were generally too faint with attending to the previous disgusting circumstances, to make accurate report with our eyes of the degree of corporal suffering inflicted. Report, of course, gave out the back knotty and livid. After scourging, he was made over, in his *San Benito*, to his friends, if he had any (but commonly such poor runagates were friendless), or to his parish officer, who, to enhance the effect of the scene, had his station allotted to him on the outside of the hall gate.

These solemn pageantries were not played off so often as to spoil the general mirth of the community. We had plenty of exercise and recreation *after* school hours; and, for myself, I must confess, that I was never happier, than in them. The Upper and the Lower Grammar Schools were held in the same room; and an imaginary line only divided their bounds. Their character was as different as that of the inhabitants on the two sides of the Pyrenees. The Rev. James Boyer was the Upper Master; but the Rev. Matthew Field presided over that portion of the

apartment, of which I had the good fortune to be a member. We lived a life as careless as birds. We talked and did just what we pleased, and nobody molested us. We carried an accidence, or a grammar, for form; but, for any trouble it gave us, we might take two years in getting through the verbs deponent, and another two in forgetting all that we had learned about them. There was now and then the formality of saying a lesson, but if you had not learned it, a brush across the shoulders (just enough to disturb a fly) was the sole remonstrance. Field never used the rod; and in truth he wielded the cane with no great good will—holding it “like a dancer.” It looked in his hands rather like an emblem than an instrument of authority; and an emblem, too, he was ashamed of. He was a good easy man, that did not care to ruffle his own peace, nor perhaps set any great consideration upon the value of juvenile time. He came among us, now and then, but often staid away whole days from us; and when he came, it made no difference to us—he had his private room to retire to, the short time he staid, to be out of the sound of our noise. Our mirth and uproar went on. We had classies of our own, without being beholden to “insolent Greece or haughty Rome,” that passed current among us—Peter Wilkins—the Adventures of the Hon. Capt. Robert Boyle—the Fortunate Blue Coat Boy—and the like. Or we cultivated a turn for meehanie or seientific operations; making little sundials of paper; or weaving those ingenious parentheses, called *cat-cradles*; or making dry peas to dance upon the end of a tin pipe; or studying the art military over that laudable game “French and English,” and a hundred other such devices to pass

away the time—mixing the useful with the agreeable—as would have made the souls of Rousseau and John Locke chuckle to have seen us.

Matthew Field belonged to that class of modest divines who affect to mix in equal proportion the gentleman, the scholar, and the *Christian*; but, I know not how, the first ingredient is generally found to be the predominating dose in the composition. He was engaged in gay parties, or with his courtly bow at some episcopal levée, when he should have been attending upon us. He had for many years the classical charge of a hundred children, during the four or five first years of their education; and his very highest form seldom proceeded further than two or three of the introductory fables of Phædrus. How things were suffered to go on thus, I cannot guess. Boyer, who was the proper person to have remedied these abuses, always affected, perhaps felt, a delicacy in interfering in a province not strictly his own. I have not been without my suspicions, that he was not altogether displeased at the contrast we presented to his end of the school. We were a sort of Helots to his young Spartans. He would sometimes, with ironic deference, send to borrow a rod of the Under Master, and then, with Sardonic grin, observe to one of his upper boys, "how neat and fresh the twigs looked." While his pale students were battering their brains over Xenophon and Plato, with a silence as deep as that enjoined by the Samite, we were enjoying ourselves at our ease in our little Goshen. We saw a little into the secrets of his discipline, and the prospect did but the more reconcile us to our lot. His thunders rolled innocuous for us; his storms came near, but never touched us; contrary to Gideon's

miracle, while all around were drenched, our fleece was dry.<sup>1</sup> His boys turned out the better scholars; we, I suspect, have the advantage in temper. His pupils cannot speak of him without something of terror allaying their gratitude; the remembrance of Field comes back with all the soothing images of indolence, and summer slumbers, and work like play, and innocent idleness, and Elysian exemptions, and life itself a "playing holiday."

Though sufficiently removed from the jurisdiction of Boyer, we were near enough (as I have said), to understand a little of his system. We occasionally heard sounds of the *Ululantes*, and caught glances of Tartarus. B. was a rabid pedant. His English style was cramped to barbarism. His Easter anthems (for his duty obliged him to those periodical flights) were grating as scrannel pipes.—He would laugh, ay, and heartily, but then it must be at Flaccus's quibble about *Rex*—or at the *tristis severitas in vultu*, or *inspicere in patinas*, of Terence—thin jests, which at their first broaching could hardly have had *vis* enough to move a Roman muscle.—He had two wigs, both pedantic, but of differing omen. The one serene, smiling, fresh powdered, betokening a mild day. The other, an old discoloured, unkempt, angry caxon, denoting frequent and bloody execution. Woe to the school, when he made his morning appearance in his *passy*, or *passionate wig*. No comet expounded surer.—J. B. had a heavy hand. I have known him double his knotty fist at a poor trembling child (the maternal milk hardly dry upon its lips) with a "Sirrah, do you presume to set your wits at me?"—Nothing was more common than to see him make a head-long

<sup>1</sup>Cowley.

entry into the school-room, from his inner recess, or library, and, with turbulent eye, singling out a lad, roar out, "Od's my life, Sirrah" (his favourite adjuration), "I have a great mind to whip you,"—then, with as sudden a retracting impulse, sling back into his lair—and, after a cooling lapse of some minutes (during which all but the culprit had totally forgotten the context), drive headlong out again, piecing out his imperfect sense, as if it had been some Devil's Litany, with the expletory yell—"and I WILL too."—In his gentler moods, when the *rabidus furor* was assuaged, he had resort to an ingenious method, peculiar, for what I have heard, to himself, of whipping the boy, and reading the Debates, at the same time; a paragraph and a lash between; which in those times, when parliamentary oratory was most at a height and flourishing in these realms, was not calculated to impress the patient with a veneration for the diffuser graces of rhetoric.

Once, and but once, the uplifted rod was known to fall ineffectual from his hand—when droll squinting W—— having been caught putting the inside of the master's desk to a use for which the architect had clearly not designed it, to justify himself, with great simplicity averred, that *he did not know that the thing had been forewarned*. This exquisite irrecognition of any law antecedent to the *oral* or *declaratory*, struck so irresistibly upon the fancy of all who heard it (the pedagogue himself not excepted) that remission was unavoidable.

Under him [Boyer] were many good and sound scholars bred.—First Grecian of my time was Lancelot Pepys Stevens, kindest of boys and men, since Cogranmar-master (and inseparable companion) with Dr.

T[rollop]e. What an edifying spectacle did this brace of friends present to those who remembered the anti-socialities of their predecessors!—You never met the one by chance in the street without a wonder, which was quickly dissipated by the almost immediate sub-appearance of the other. Generally arm in arm, these kindly coadjutors lightened for each other the toilsome duties of their profession, and when, in advanced age, one found it convenient to retire, the other was not long in discovering that it suited him to lay down the fasces also. Oh, it is pleasant, as it is rare, to find the same arm linked in yours at forty, which at thirteen helped it to turn over the *Cicero De Amicitia*, or some tale of Antique Friendship, which the young heart even then was burning to anticipate!—Co-Grecian with S. was Th[ornton], who has since executed with ability various diplomatic functions at the Northern courts. Th—— was a tall, dark, saturnine youth, sparing of speech, with raven locks.—Thomas Fanshaw Middleton followed him (now Bishop of Calcutta), a scholar and a gentleman in his teens. He has the reputation of an excellent critic; and is author (besides the *Country Spectator*) of a *Treatise on the Greek Article*, against Sharpe.—M. is said to bear his mitre high in India, where the *regni novitas* (I dare say) sufficiently justifies the bearing. A humility quite as primitive as that of Jewel or Hooker might not be exactly fitted to impress the minds of those Anglo-Asiatic diocesans with a reverence for home institutions, and the church which those fathers watered. The manners of M. at school, though firm, were mild, and unassuming.—Next to M. (if not senior to him) was Richards, author of the *Aboriginal Britons*, the most spirited of the Oxford Prize Poems; a pale, studious Grecian.—Then fol-

lowed poor S[cott], ill-fated M[aunde] ! of these the Muse is silent.

Finding some of Edward's race  
Unhappy, pass their annals by.

Come back into memory, like as thou wert in the day-spring of thy fancies, with hope like a fiery column before thee—the dark pillar not yet turned—Samuel Taylor Coleridge—Logician, Metaphysician, Bard!—How have I seen the casual passer through the Cloisters stand still, intranced with admiration (while he weighed the disproportion between the *speech* and the *garb* of the young *Mirandula*), to hear thee unfold, in thy deep and sweet intonations, the mysteries of *Jamblichus*, or *Plotinus* (for even in those years thou waxedst not pale at such philosophic draughts), or reciting *Homer* in his Greek, or *Pindar*—while the walls of the old Grey Friars re-echoed to the accents of the *inspired charity-boy*!—Many were the “*wit-combats*,” (to dally awhile with the words of old Fuller,) between him and C. V. Le G[rice], “which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon, and an English man of war: Master Coleridge, like the former, was built far higher in learning, solid, but slow in his performances. C. V. L., with the English man of war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention.”

Nor shalt thou, their compeer, be quickly forgotten, Allen, with the cordial smile, and still more cordial laugh, with which thou wert wont to make the old Cloisters shake, in thy cognition of some poignant jest of theirs; or the anticipation of some more material, and, peradventure, practical one, of thine own. Extinct

are those miles, with that beautiful countenance, with which (for thou wert the *Nireus formosus* of the school), in the days of thy maturer waggery, thou didst disarm the wrath of infuriated town-damsel, who, incensed by provoking pinch, turning tigress-like round, suddenly converted by thy angel-look, exchanged the half-formed terrible "*bl—*," for a gentler greeting—"bless thy handsome face!"

Next follow two, who ought to be now alive, and the friends of Elia—the junior Le G[rice] and F[avell]; who impelled, the former by a roving temper, the latter by too quick a sense of neglect—ill capable of enduring the slights poor Sizars are sometimes subject to in our seats of learning—exchanged their Alma Mater for the camp; perishing, one by climate, and one on the plains of Salamanca:—Le G—, sanguine, volatile, sweet-natured; F—, dogged, faithful, anticipative of insult, warm-hearted, with something of the old Roman height about him.

Fine, frank-hearted Fr[anklin], the present master of Hertford, with Marmaduke T[hompson], mildest of Missionaries—and both my good friends still—close the catalogue of Grecians in my time.

### III

#### EARLY MANHOOD: MARY LAMB

LAMB left Christ's Hospital in 1789. He had an impediment in his speech, and could not have taken one of the school scholarships at Cambridge, as those proceeding to the University were expected to enter the Church: moreover it was necessary that he should earn money and help his parents, who were poor, and threatened with even graver troubles than poverty. Lamb's elder brother, John (then twenty-six years old), was in the South Sea House, and there Charles Lamb obtained a post in 1791. He did not remain long in this position, but by the influence of Samuel Salt he became a clerk in the accountants' office of the East India Company (April, 1792), receiving for the first three years no salary; for the year 1795-6, £40; and henceforward a gradually increasing sum until in 1825, when he resigned, he was receiving £700 a year. In his earlier years he supplemented his income by writing humorous paragraphs for various newspapers. (See *Newspapers Thirty-Five Years Ago*, in the *Last Essays of Elia*.)

In an essay called the *South Sea House*, (*Essays of Elia*), Lamb has given a description of the clerks at his first place of business, but nothing else is known of his life there.

His schoolfellow, Coleridge, had gone to Cambridge in 1791. Occasionally he came to London, and Lamb then saw him at a tavern in Newgate Street, called

the "Salutation and Cat," where the two smoked, drank, and talked literature copiously.

The grave trouble already mentioned was insanity. It was the family malady, and in the winter of 1795-6 Lamb himself, for the only time in his life, succumbed to it. In September, 1796, Mary Lamb, his sister, in a sudden fit of madness, stabbed her mother to the heart, wounded her father (then almost imbecile), and might have done further harm had not Lamb himself snatched the knife from her hand.

The following is Lamb's account of the event to Coleridge.

## LETTER

TO COLERIDGE

P.M. September 27th, 1796.

My dearest Friend,—White or some of my friends or the public papers by this time may have informed you of the terrible calamities that have fallen on our family. I will only give you the outlines. My poor dear dearest sister in a fit of insanity has been the death of her own mother. I was at hand only time enough to snatch the knife out of her grasp. She is at present in a madhouse, from whence I fear she must be moved to an hospital. God has preserved to me my senses,—I eat and drink and sleep, and have my judgment I believe very sound. My poor father was slightly wounded, and I am left to take care of him and my aunt. Mr. Norris of the Bluecoat School has been very very kind to us, and we have no other friend, but thank God I am very calm and composed, and able to do the best that remains to do. Write,—as

religious a letter as possible—but no mention of what is gone and done with.—With me “the former things are passed away,” and I have something more to do than [than] to feel——

God almighty have us all in his keeping.—

C. LAMB.

Mention nothing of poetry. I have destroyed every vestige of past vanities of that kind. Do as you please, but if you publish, publish mine (I give free leave) without name or initial, and never send me a book, I charge you.

Your own judgment will convince you not to take any notice of this yet to your dear wife.—You look after your family,—I have my reason and strength left to take care of mine. I charge you, don't think of coming to see me. Write. I will not see you if you come. God almighty love you and all of us.—

---

Henceforward Lamb gave up his own natural hopes, and devoted himself to the care of his father (who died in 1799) and his sister. His brother John seems to have meddled as little as possible in the affairs of the family. Lamb described him with considerable frankness, under the name of James Elia, in the essay, *My Relations*, (*Essays of Elia*).

Charles and Mary Lamb became companions for life. The sister had occasional fits of insanity, which became more frequent as she grew older, but she could usually tell when they were coming on, and her brother had arranged for her to be taken good care of while they lasted.

The *Bridget Elia* of the following essay (*London Magazine*, July 1821, and *Essays of Elia*) is Mary Lamb.

### MACKERY END IN HERTFORDSHIRE

BRIDGET ELIA has been my housekeeper for many a long year. I have obligations to Bridget, extending beyond the period of memory. We house together, old bachelor and maid, in a sort of double singleness; with such tolerable comfort, upon the whole, that I, for one, find in myself no sort of disposition to go out upon the mountains, with the rash king's offspring, to bewail my celibacy. We agree pretty well in our tastes and habits—yet so, as “with a difference.” We are generally in harmony, with occasional bickerings—as it should be among near relations. Our sympathies are rather understood, than expressed; and once, upon my dissembling a tone in my voice more kind than ordinary, my cousin burst into tears, and complained that I was altered. We are both great readers in different directions. While I am hanging over (for the thousandth time) some passage in old Burton, or one of his strange contemporaries, she is abstracted in some modern tale, or adventure, whereof our common reading-table is daily fed with assiduously fresh supplies. Narrative teases me. I have little concern in the progress of events. She must have a story—well, ill, or indifferently told—so there be life stirring in it, and plenty of good or evil accidents. The fluctuations of fortune in fiction—and almost in real life—have ceased to interest, or operate but dully upon me. Out-of-the-way humours and opinions—heads with some diverting twist in them—

the oddities of authorship please me most. My cousin has a native disrelish of any thing that sounds odd or bizarre. Nothing goes down with her, that is quaint, irregular, or out of the road of common sympathy. She "holds Nature more clever." I can pardon her blindness to the beautiful obliquities of the *Religio Medici*; but she must apologise to me for certain disrespectful insinuations, which she has been pleased to throw out latterly, touching the intellectuals of a dear favourite of mine, of the last century but one—the thrice noble, chaste, and virtuous,—but again somewhat fantastical, and original-brain'd, generous Margaret Newcastle.

It has been the lot of my cousin, oftener perhaps than I could have wished, to have had for her associates and mine, free-thinkers—leaders, and disciples, of novel philosophies and systems; but she neither wrangles with, nor accepts, their opinions. That which was good and venerable to her, when a child, retains its authority over her mind still. She never juggles or plays tricks with her understanding.

We are both of us inclined to be a little too positive; and I have observed the result of our disputes to be almost uniformly this—that in matters of fact, dates, and circumstances, it turns out, that I was in the right, and my cousin in the wrong. But where we have differed upon moral points; upon something proper to be done, or let alone; whatever heat of opposition, or steadiness of conviction, I set out with, I am sure always, in the long run, to be brought over to her way of thinking.

I must touch upon the foibles of my kinswoman with a gentle hand, for Bridget does not like to be told of her faults. She hath an awkward trick (to

say no worse of it) of reading in company: at which times she will answer *yes* or *no* to a question, without fully understanding its purport—which is provoking, and derogatory in the highest degree to the dignity of the putter of the said question. Her presence of mind is equal to the most pressing trials of life, but will sometimes desert her upon trifling occasions. When the purpose requires it, and is a thing of moment, she can speak to it greatly; but in matters which are not stuff of the conscience, she hath been known sometimes to let slip a word less seasonably.

Her education in youth was not much attended to; and she happily missed all that train of female garniture, which passeth by the name of accomplishments. She was tumbled early, by accident or design, into a spacious closet of good old English reading, without much selection or prohibition, and browsed at will upon that fair and wholesome pasturage. Had I twenty girls, they should be brought up exactly in this fashion. I know not whether their chance in wedlock might not be diminished by it; but I can answer for it, that it makes (if the worst come to the worst) most incomparable old maids.

In a season of distress, she is the truest comforter; but in the teasing accidents, and minor perplexities, which do not call out the *will* to meet them, she sometimes maketh matters worse by an excess of participation. If she does not always divide your trouble, upon the pleasanter occasions of life she is sure always to treble your satisfaction. She is excellent to be at a play with, or upon a visit; but best, when she goes a journey with you.

We made an excursion together a few summers since, into Hertfordshire, to beat up the quarters of

some of our less-known relations in that fine corn country.

The oldest thing I remember is Mackery End; or Mackarel End, as it is spelt, perhaps more properly, in some old maps of Hertfordshire; a farm-house,—delightfully situated within a gentle walk from Wheathampstead. I can just remember having been there, on a visit to a great-aunt, when I was a child, under the care of Bridget; who, as I have said, is older than myself by some ten years. I wish that I could throw into a heap the remainder of our joint existences, that we might share them in equal division. But that is impossible. The house was at that time in the occupation of a substantial yeoman, who had married my grandmother's sister. His name was Gladman. My grandmother was a Bruton, married to a Field. The Gladmans and the Brutons are still flourishing in that part of the county, but the Fields are almost extinct. More than forty years had elapsed since the visit I speak of; and, for the greater portion of that period, we had lost sight of the other two branches also. Who or what sort of persons inherited Mackery End—kindred or strange folk—we were afraid almost to conjecture, but determined some day to explore.

By somewhat a circuitous route, taking the noble park at Luton in our way from Saint Alban's, we arrived at the spot of our anxious curiosity about noon. The sight of the old farm-house, though every trace of it was effaced from my recollection, affected me with a pleasure which I had not experienced for many a year. For though I had forgotten it, we had never forgotten being there together, and we had been talking about Mackery End all our lives, till memory on

my part became mocked with a phantom of itself, and I thought I knew the aspect of a place, which, when present, O how unlike it was to *that*, which I had conjured up so many times instead of it!

Still the air breathed balmily about it; the season was in the "heart of June," and I could say with the poet,

But thou, that didst appear so fair  
To fond imagination,  
Dost rival in the light of day  
Her delicate creation!

Bridget's was more a waking bliss than mine, for she easily remembered her old acquaintance again—some altered features, of course, a little grudged at. At first, indeed, she was ready to disbelieve for joy; but the scene soon re-confirmed itself in her affections—and she traversed every out-post of the old mansion, to the wood-house, the orchard, the place where the pigeon-house had stood (house and birds were alike flown)—with a breathless impatience of recognition, which was more pardonable perhaps than decorous at the age of fifty odd. But Bridget in some things is behind her years.

The only thing left was to get into the house—and that was a difficulty which to me singly would have been insurmountable; for I am terribly shy in making myself known to strangers and out-of-date kinsfolk. Love, stronger than scruple, winged my cousin in without me; but she soon returned with a creature that might have sat to a sculptor for the image of Welcome. It was the youngest of the Gladmans; who, by marriage with a Bruton, had become mistress of the old mansion. A comely brood are the Brutons. Six of them, females, were noted as the handsomest

young women in the county. But this adopted Bruton, in my mind, was better than they all—more comely. She was born too late to have remembered me. She just recollected in early life to have had her cousin Bridget once pointed out to her, climbing a stile. But the name of kindred, and of cousinship, was enough. Those slender ties, that prove slight as gossamer in the rending atmosphere of a metropolis, bind faster, as we found it, in hearty, homely, loving Hertfordshire. In five minutes we were as thoroughly acquainted as if we had been born and bred up together; were familiar, even to the calling each other by our Christian names. So Christians should call one another. To have seen Bridget, and her—it was like the meeting of the two scriptural cousins! There was a grace and dignity, an amplitude of form and stature, answering to her mind, in this farmer's wife, which would have shined in a palace—or so we thought it. We were made welcome by husband and wife equally—we, and our friend that was with us.—I had almost forgotten him—but B. F. will not so soon forget that meeting, if peradventure he shall read this on the far distant shores where the Kangaroo haunts. The fatted calf was made ready, or rather was already so, as if in anticipation of our coming; and, after an appropriate glass of native wine, never let me forget with what honest pride this hospitable cousin made us proceed to Wheathampstead, to introduce us (as some new-found rarity) to her mother and sister Gladmans, who did indeed know something more of us, at a time when she almost knew nothing.—With what corresponding kindness we were received by them also—how Bridget's memory, exalted by the occasion, warmed into a thousand half-obliterated

recollections of things and persons, to my utter astonishment, and her own—and to the astoundment of B. F. who sat by, almost the only thing that was not a cousin there,—old effaced images of more than half-forgotten names and circumstances still crowding back upon her, as words written in lemon come out upon exposure to a friendly warmth,—when I forget all this, then may my country cousins forget me; and Bridget no more remember, that in the days of weakling infancy I was her tender charge—as I have been her care in foolish manhood since—in those pretty pastoral walks, long ago, about Mackery End, in Hertfordshire.

---

In early youth Lamb had lost his heart to a fair "Alice W——n," as he always called her; but the troubles of his friends ended all his hopes, and he set himself to lead a bachelor life, though not always without dreams of what might have been.

The essay called *Dream Children* appeared in the *London Magazine* for January, 1822, and in the *Essays of Elia*.

### DREAM-CHILDREN; A REVERIE

CHILDREN love to listen to stories about their elders, when *they* were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle, or grandame, whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field, who lived in a great house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived) which had been the scene—so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country—of the tragic

incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood. Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Redbreasts, till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say, how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by every body, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining county; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterwards came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C.'s tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, "that would be foolish indeed." And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighbourhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good indeed that she

knew all the Psalter by heart, ay, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer—here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till, upon my looking grave, it desisted—the best dancer, I was saying, in the county, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said “those innocents would do her no harm;” and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she—and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eye-brows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grand-children, having us to the great-house in the holydays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the Twelve Cæsars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken pannels, with the gilding almost rubbed out—sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and

then a solitary gardening man would cross me—and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then,—and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir apples, which were good for nothing but to look at—or in lying about upon the fresh grass, with all the fine garden smells around me—or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth—or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings,—I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavours of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such like common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then, in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grand-mother Field loved all her grand-children, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L——, because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out—and yet he

loved the old great-house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries—and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of every body, but of their great-grandmother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy—for he was a good bit older than me—many a mile when I could not walk for pain;—and how in after life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances enough for him when he was impatient, and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but afterwards it haunted and haunted me; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarrelling with him (for we quarreled sometimes), rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as he their poor uncle must have been when the doctor took off his limb. Here the children fell a crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for uncle John, and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother. Then I told how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W—n; and, as much as

children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial meant in maidens—when suddenly, turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of re-presentment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech: "We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence, and a name"—and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor arm-chair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side—but John L. (or James Elia) was gone for ever.

#### IV

#### "A CLERK I WAS IN LONDON GAY"

LAMB's life as a clerk at the East India House was by no means a dull one. His duties were, apparently, not very exacting, though as he grew older they became irksome enough; but in his earlier days, apart from the recurring illnesses of his sister, his life was full of pleasures and interests. He had many friends and acquaintances (he sometimes complained that he had too many): he smoked and drank a good deal, enjoying both indulgences immensely, and occasionally making an attempt to give up one or the other of them, but never succeeding for long: he appreciated very keenly the pleasures of the table: he loved London, its crowds, its streets, its theatres; above all, no man ever loved literature more deeply than he did. He was able to gratify most of his tastes, and as the years went by he found himself acquiring literary fame.

But the other side of the picture must not be forgotten. He was devotedly attached to his sister, and her periodical illnesses and absence from home took heavy toll from his happiness.

#### LETTER

TO WORDSWORTH.

P.M. January 30, 1801.

I ought before this to have reply'd to your very kind invitation into Cumberland. With you and your

Sister I could gang any where. But I am afraid whether I shall ever be able to afford so desperate a Journey. Separate from the pleasure of your company, I don't much care if I never see a mountain in my life. I have passed all my days in London, until I have formed as many and intense local attachments, as any of you mountaineers can have done with dead nature. The Lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet Street, the innumerable trades, tradesmen and customers, coaches, waggons, playhouses, all the bustle and wickedness round about Covent Garden, the very women of the Town, the Watchmen, drunken scenes, rattles,—life awake, if you awake, at all hours of the night, the impossibility of being dull in Fleet Street, the crowds, the very dirt & mud, the Sun shining upon houses and pavements, the print shops, the old book stalls, parsons cheap'ning books, coffee houses, steams of soups from kitchens, the pantomimes, London itself a pantomime and a masquerade,—all these things work themselves into my mind and feed me, without a power of satiating me. The wonder of these sights impells me into night-walks about her crowded streets, and I often shed tears in the motley Strand from fulness of joy at so much Life.—All these emotions must be strange to you. So are your rural emotions to me. But consider, what must I have been doing all my life, not to have lent great portions of my heart with usury to such scenes?—

My attachments are all local, purely local. I have no passion (or have had none since I was in love, and then it was the spurious engendering of poetry & books) to groves and vallies. The rooms where I was born, the furniture which has been before my eyes all my life, a book case which has followed me about (1111

a faithful dog, only exceeding him in knowledge) wherever I have moved—old chairs, old tables, streets, squares, where I have sunned myself, my old school,—these are my mistresses. Have I not enough, without your mountains? I do not envy you. I should pity you, did I not know, that the Mind will make friends of any thing. Your sun & moon and skys and hills & lakes affect me no more, or scarcely come to me in more venerable characters, than as a gilded room with tapestry and tapers, where I might live with handsome visible objects. I consider the clouds above me but as a roof, beautifully painted but unable to satisfy the mind, and at last, like the pictures of the apartment of a connoisseur, unable to afford him any longer a pleasure. So fading upon me, from disuse, have been the Beauties of Nature, as they have been confinedly called; so ever fresh & green and warm are all the inventions of men and assemblies of men in this great city. I should certainly have laughed with dear Joanna.

Give my kindest love, *and my sister's*, to D. & yourself and a kiss from me to little Barbara Lewthwaite.

C. LAMB.

Thank you for Liking my Play!!

#### LETTER

TO MANNING.

16 Mitre-Court Buildings,

Saturday, 24th [i.e. 23rd] Feb., 1805.

Dear Manning,—I have been very unwell since I saw you. A sad depression of spirits, a most unaccountable nervousness; from which I have been partially relieved by an odd accident. You knew Dick

Hopkins, the swearing scullion of Caius? This fellow, by industry and agility, has thrust himself into the important situations (no sinecures, believe me) of cook to Trinity Hall and Caius College: and the generous creature has contrived with the greatest delicacy imaginable, to send me a present of Cambridge brawn. What makes it the more extraordinary is, that the man never saw me in his life that I know of. I suppose he has *heard* of me. I did not immediately recognise the donor; but one of Richard's cards, which had accidentally fallen into the straw, detected him in a moment. Dick, you know, was always remarkable for flourishing. His card imports, that 'orders (to wit, for brawn), from any part of England, Scotland, or Ireland, will be duly executed,' &c. At first, I thought of declining the present; but Richard knew my blind side when he pitched upon brawn. 'Tis of all my hobbies the supreme in the eating way. He might have sent sops from the pan, skimmings, crumplets, chips, hog's lard, the tender brown judiciously scalped from a fillet of veal (dexterously replaced by a salamander), the tops of asparagus, fugitive livers, run-away gizzards of fowls, the eyes of martyred pigs, tender effusions of laxative woodcocks, the red spawn of lobsters, leverets' ears, and such pretty filehings common to cooks; but these had been ordinary presents, the everyday courtesies of dishwashers to their sweethearts. Brawn was a noble thought. It is not every common gullet-fancier that can properly esteem it. It is like a picture of one of the choice old Italian masters. Its gusto is of that hidden sort. As Wordsworth sings of a modest poet,—“you must love him, ere to you he will seem worthy of your love;” so brawn, you

must taste it, ere to you it will seem to have any taste at all. But 'tis nuts to the adept: those that will send out their tongues and feelers to find it out. It will be wooed, and not unsought be won. Now, ham-essence, lobsters, turtle, such popular minions, absolutely *court you*, lay themselves out to strike you at first smack, like one of David's pictures (they call him *Darveed*), compared with the plain russet-coated wealth of a Titian or a Correggio, as I illustrated above. Such are the obvious glaring heathen virtues of a corporation dinner, compared with the reserved collegiate worth of brawn. Do me the favour to leave off the business which you may be at present upon, and go immediately to the kitchens of Trinity and Caius, and make my most respectful compliments to Mr. Richard Hopkins, and assure him that his brawn is most excellent; and that I am moreover obliged to him for his innuendo about salt water and bran, which I shall not fail to improve. I leave it to you whether you shall choose to pay him the civility of asking him to dinner while you stay in Cambridge, or in whatever other way you may best like to show your gratitude to *my friend*. Richard Hopkins, considered in many points of view, is a very extraordinary character. Adieu: I hope to see you to supper in London soon, where we will taste Richard's brawn, and drink his health in a cheerful but moderate cup. We have not many such men in any rank of life as Mr. R. Hopkins. Crisp the barber, of St. Mary's, was just such another. I wonder *he* never sent me any little token, some chest-nuts, or a puff, or two pound of hair just to remember him by; gifts are like nails. *Præsens ut absens*, that is, your *present* makes amends for your absence.

Yours,

C. LAMB.

## LETTER

TO COLERIDGE.

March 9th, 1822.

Dear C.,—It gives me great satisfaction to hear that the pig turned out so well—they are interesting creatures at a certain age—*what a pity such buds* should blow out into the maturity of rank bacon! You had all some of the crackling—and brain sauce—did you remember to rub it with butter, and gently dredge it a little, just before the crisis? Did the eyes come away kindly with no *Œdipean* avulsion? Was the crackling the colour of the ripe pomegranate? Had you no complement of boiled neck of mutton before it, to blunt the edge of delicate desire? Did you flesh maiden teeth in it? Not that I sent the pig, or can form the remotest guess what part Owen could play in the business. I never knew him give anything away in my life. He would not begin with strangers. I suspect the pig, after all, was meant for me; but at the unlucky juncture of time being absent, the present somehow went round to Highgate. To confess an honest truth, a pig is one of those things I could never think of sending away. Teals, wigeons, snipes, barn-door fowl, ducks, geese—your tame villatic things—Welsh mutton, collars of brawn, sturgeon, fresh or pickled, your potted char, Swiss cheeses, French pies, early grapes, muscadines, I impart as freely unto my friends as to myself. They are but self-extended; but pardon me if I stop somewhere—where the fine feeling of benevolence giveth a higher smack than the sensual rarity—there my friends (or any good man) may command me; but pigs are pigs, and I myself therein am nearest to myself. Nay, I

should think it an affront, an undervaluing done to Nature who bestowed such a boon upon me, if in a churlish mood I parted with the precious gift. One of the bitterest pangs of remorse I ever felt was when a child—when my kind old aunt had strained her pocket-strings to bestow a sixpenny whole plum-cake upon me. In my way home through the Borough, I met a venerable old man, not a mendicant, but thereabouts—a look-beggar, not a verbal petitioner; and in the coxcombry of taught-charity I gave away the cake to him. I walked on a little in all the pride of an Evangelical peacock, when of a sudden my old aunt's kindness crossed me—the sum it was to her—the pleasure she had a right to expect that I—not the old impostor—should take in eating her cake—the cursed ingratitude by which, under the colour of a Christian virtue, I had frustrated her cherished purpose." I sobbed, wept, and took it to heart so grievously, that I think I never suffered the like—and I was right. It was a piece of unfeeling hypocrisy, and proved a lesson to me ever after. The cake has long been masticated, consigned to dunghill with the ashes of that unseasonable pauper.

But when Providence, who is better to us all than our aunts, gives me a pig, remembering my temptation and my fall, I shall endeavour to act towards it more in the spirit of the donor's purpose.

Yours (short of pig) to command in everything,

C. L.

---

Lamb celebrated Roast Pig yet more gloriously in the essay which follows. It first appeared in the *London Magazine* for September, 1822, and subsequently in the *Essays of Elia*.

## A DISSERTATION UPON ROAST PIG

MANKIND, says a Chinese manuscript, which my friend M. was obliging enough to read and explain to me, for the first seventy thousand ages ate their meat raw, clawing or biting it from the living animal, just as they do in Abyssinia to this day. This period is not obscurely hinted at by their great Confucius in the second chapter of his Mundane Mutations, where he designates a kind of golden age by the term Cho-fang, literally the Cooks' holiday. The manuscript goes on to say, that the art of roasting, or rather broiling (which I take to be the elder brother) was accidentally discovered in the manner following. The swine-herd, Ho-ti, having gone out into the woods one morning, as his manner was, to collect mast for his hogs, left his cottage in the care of his eldest son Bo-bo, a great lubberly boy, who being fond of playing with fire, as youngsters of his age commonly are, let some sparks escape into a bundle of straw, which kindling quickly, spread the conflagration over every part of their poor mansion, till it was reduced to ashes. Together with the cottage (a sorry antediluvian make-shift of a building, you may think it), what was of much more importance, a fine litter of new-farrowed pigs, no less than nine in number, perished. China pigs have been esteemed a luxury all over the East from the remotest periods that we read of. Bo-bo was in the utmost consternation, as you may think, not so much for the sake of the tenement, which his father and he could easily build up again with a few dry branches, and the labour of an hour or two, at any time, as for the loss of the pigs. While he was thinking what he should say to his father, and wringing his hands over

the smoking remnants of one of those untimely sufferers, an odour assailed his nostrils, unlike any scent which he had before experienced. What could it proceed from?—not from the burnt cottage—he had smelt that smell before—indeed this was by no means the first accident of the kind which had occurred through the negligence of this unlucky young fire-brand. Much less did it resemble that of any known herb, weed, or flower. A premonitory moistening at the same time overflowed his nether lip. He knew not what to think. He next stooped down to feel the pig, if there were any signs of life in it. He burnt his fingers, and to cool them he applied them in his booby fashion to his mouth. Some of the crumbs of the scorched skin had come away with his fingers, and for the first time in his life (in the world's life indeed, for before him no man had known it) he tasted—*crackling!* Again he felt and fumbled at the pig. It did not burn him so much now, still he licked his fingers from a sort of habit. The truth at length broke into his slow understanding, that it was the pig that smelt so, and the pig that tasted so delicious; and, surrendering himself up to the new-born pleasure, he fell to tearing up whole handfuls of the scorched skin with the flesh next it, and was cramming it down his throat in his beastly fashion, when his sire entered amid the smoking rafters, armed with retributory cudgel, and finding how affairs stood, began to rain blows upon the young rogue's shoulders, as thick as hail-stones, which Bo-bo heeded not any more than if they had been flies. The tickling pleasure, which he experienced in his lower regions, had rendered him quite callous to any inconveniences he might feel in those remote quarters. His father might lay on, but

he could not beat him from his pig, till he had fairly made an end of it, when, becoming a little more sensible of his situation, something like the following dialogue ensued.

"You graceless whelp, what have you got there devouring? Is it not enough that you have burnt me down three houses with your dog's tricks, and be hanged to you, but you must be eating fire, and I know not what—what have you got there, I say?"

"O father, the pig, the pig, do come and taste how nice the burnt pig eats."

The ears of Ho-ti tingled with horror. He cursed his son, and he cursed himself that ever he should beget a son that should eat burnt pig.

Bo-bo, whose scent was wonderfully sharpened since morning, soon raked out another pig, and fairly rending it asunder, thrust the lesser half by main force into the fists of Ho-ti, still shouting out, "Eat, eat, eat the burnt pig, father, only taste—O Lord,"—with such-like barbarous ejaculations, cramming all the while as if he would choke.

Ho-ti trembled every joint while he grasped the abominable thing, wavering whether he should not put his son to death for an unnatural young monster, when the crackling scorching his fingers, as it had done his son's, and applying the same remedy to them, he in his turn tasted some of its flavour, which, make what sour mouths he would for a pretence, proved not altogether displeasing to him. In conclusion (for the manuscript here is a little tedious), both father and son fairly sat down to the mess, and never left off till they had despatched all that remained of the litter.

Bo-bo was strictly enjoined not to let the secret escape, for the neighbours would certainly have stoned

them for a couple of abominable wretches, who could think of improving upon the good meat which God had sent them. Nevertheless, strange stories got about. It was observed that Ho-ti's cottage was burnt down now more frequently than ever. Nothing but fires from this time forward. Some would break out in broad day, others in the night-time. As often as the sow farrowed, so sure was the house of Ho-ti to be in a blaze; and Ho-ti himself, which was the more remarkable, instead of chastising his son, seemed to grow more indulgent to him than ever. At length they were watched, the terrible mystery discovered, and father and son summoned to take their trial at Peking, then an inconsiderable assize town. Evidence was given, the obnoxious food itself produced in court, and verdict about to be pronounced, when the foreman of the jury begged that some of the burnt pig, of which the culprits stood accused, might be handed into the box. He handled it, and they all handled it; and burning their fingers, as Bo-bo and his father had done before them, and nature prompting to each of them the same remedy, against the face of all the facts, and the clearest charge which judge had ever given,—to the surprise of the whole court, townsfolk, strangers, reporters, and all present—without leaving the box, or any manner of consultation whatever, they brought in a simultaneous verdict of Not Guilty.

The judge, who was a shrewd fellow, winked at the manifest iniquity of the decision: and, when the court was dismissed, went privily, and bought up all the pigs that could be had for love or money. In a few days his Lordship's town house was observed to be on fire. The thing took wing, and now there was nothing to be seen but fires in every direction. Fuel and pigs

grew enormously dear all over the district. The insurance offices one and all shut up shop. People built slighter and slighter every day, until it was feared that the very science of architecture would in no long time be lost to the world. Thus this custom of firing houses continued, till in process of time, says my manuscript, a sage arose, like our Locke, who made a discovery that the flesh of swine, or indeed of any other animal, might be cooked (*burnt*, as they called it) without the necessity of consuming a whole house to dress it. Then first began the rude form of a gridiron. Roasting by the string, or spit, came in a century or two later, I forget in whose dynasty. By such slow degrees, concludes the manuscript, do the most useful, and seemingly the most obvious arts, make their way among mankind.—

Without placing too implicit faith in the account above given, it must be agreed, that if a worthy pretext for so dangerous an experiment as setting houses on fire (especially in these days) could be assigned in favour of any culinary object, that pretext and excuse might be found in ROAST PIG.

Of all the delicacies in the whole *mundus edibilis*, I will maintain it to be the most delicate—*princeps obsoniorum*.

I speak not of your grown porkers—things between pig and pork—those hobbydehoys—but a young and tender suckling—under a moon old—guiltless as yet of the sty—with no original speck of the *amor immunditiæ*, the hereditary failing of the first parent, yet manifest—his voice as yet not broken, but something between a childish treble, and a grumble—the mild forerunner, or *prælude*, of a grunt.

*He must be roasted.* I am not ignorant that our

ancestors ate them seethed, or boiled—but what a sacrifice of the exterior tegument!

There is no flavour comparable, I will contend, to that of the crisp, tawny, well-watched, not over-roasted, *crackling*, as it is well called—the very teeth are invited to their share of the pleasure at this banquet in overcoming the coy, brittle resistance—with the adhesive oleaginous—O call it not fat—but an indefinable sweetness growing up to it—the tender blossoming of fat—fat cropped in the bud—taken in the shoot—in the first innocence—the cream and quintessence of the child-pig's yet pure food—the lean, no lean, but a kind of animal manna—or, rather, fat and lean (if it must be so) so blended and running into each other, that both together make but one ambrosian result, or common substance.

Behold him, while he is doing—it seemeth rather a refreshing warmth, than a scorching heat, that he is so passive to. How equably he twirleth round the string!—Now he is just done. To see the extreme sensibility of that tender age, he hath wept out his pretty eyes—radiant jellies—shooting stars—

See him in the dish, his second cradle, how meek he lieth!—wouldst thou have had this innocent grow up to the grossness and indocility which too often accompany maturer swinehood? Ten to one he would have proved a glutton, a sloven, an obstinate, disagreeable animal—wallowing in all manner of filthy conversation—from these sins he is happily snatched away—

Ere sin could blight, or sorrow fade,  
Death came with timely care—

his memory is odoriferous—no clown curseth, while his stomach half rejecteth, the rank bacon—no coal-heaver bolteth him in reeking sausages—he hath a

as freely as I receive them. I love to taste them; as it were, upon the tongue of my friend. But a stop must be put somewhere. One would not, like Lear, "give every thing." I make my stand upon pig. Methinks it is an ingratitude to the Giver of all good flavours, to extra-domiciliate, or send out of the house, slightly, (under pretext of friendship, or I know not what) a blessing so particularly adapted, predestined, I may say, to my individual palate—It argues an insensibility.

I remember a touch of conscience in this kind at school. My good old aunt, who never parted from me at the end of a holiday without stuffing a sweet-meat, or some nice thing, into my pocket, had dismissed me one evening with a smoking plum-cake, fresh from the oven. In my way to school (it was over London bridge) a grey-headed old beggar saluted me (I have no doubt at this time of day that he was a counterfeit). I had no pence to console him with, and in the vanity of self-denial, and the very coxcombry of charity, school-boy like, I made him a present of—the whole cake! I walked on a little, buoyed up, as one is on such occasions, with a sweet soothing of self-satisfaction; but, before I had got to the end of the bridge, my better feelings returned, and I burst into tears, thinking how ungrateful I had been to my good aunt, to go and give her good gift away to a stranger, that I had never seen before, and who might be a bad man for aught I knew; and then I thought of the pleasure my aunt would be taking in thinking that I—I myself, and not another—would eat her nice cake—and what should I say to her the next time I saw her—how naughty I was to part with her pretty present—and the odour of that spicy cake came back

upon my recollection, and the pleasure and the curiosity I had taken in seeing her make it, and her joy when she sent it to the oven, and how disappointed she would feel that I had never had a bit of it in my mouth at last—and I blamed my impertinent spirit of alms-giving, and out-of-place hypocrisy of goodness, and above all I wished never to see the face again of that insidious, good-for-nothing, old grey impostor.

Our ancestors were nice in their method of sacrificing these tender victims. We read of pigs whipt to death with something of a shock, as we hear of any other obsolete custom. The age of discipline is gone by, or it would be curious to inquire (in a philosophical light merely) what effect this process might have towards intenerating and dulcifying a substance, naturally so mild and dulcet as the flesh of young pigs. It looks like refining a violet. Yet we should be cautious, while we condemn the inhumanity, how we censure the wisdom of the practice. It might impart a gusto—

I remember an hypothesis, argued upon by the young students, when I was at St. Omer's, and maintained with much learning and pleasantry on both sides, "Whether, supposing that the flavour of a pig who obtained his death by whipping (*per flagellationem extremam*) superadded a pleasure upon the palate of a man more intense than any possible suffering we can conceive in the animal, is man justified in using that method of putting the animal to death?" I forget the decision.

His sauce should be considered. Decidedly, a few bread crumbs, done up with his liver and brains, and a dash of mild sage. But, banish, dear Mrs. Cook, I beseech you, the whole onion tribe. Barbecue your

whole hogs to your palate, steep them in shalots, stuff them out with plantations of the rank and guilty garlic; you cannot poison them, or make them stronger than they are—but consider, he is a weakling—a flower.

The theatre was always one of Lamb's favourite resorts, and he wrote some of the finest dramatic criticism, (chiefly on the old writers, Shakespeare and the other Elizabethans), in the English language. In 1808 he published *Specimens of the English Dramatic Writers*, which did much to call the attention of Englishmen to the forgotten Elizabethan dramatists.

The essay *My First Play* appeared in the *London Magazine* for December, 1821, and in the *Essays of Elia*.

### MY FIRST PLAY

AT the north end of Cross-court there yet stands a portal, of some architectural pretensions, though reduced to humble use, serving at present for an entrance to a printing-office. This old door-way, if you are young, reader, you may not know was the identical pit entrance to Old Drury—Garrick's Drury—all of it that is left. I never pass it without shaking some forty years from off my shoulders, recurring to the evening when I passed through it to see *my first play*. The afternoon had been wet, and the condition of our going (the elder folks and myself) was, that rain should cease. With what a beating heart I watch from the window the puddles, from the mess of which I was taught to prognosticate the cessation! I seem to remember the last spurt, and the glee with which I ran to announce it.

We went with orders, which my godfather F. had sent us. He kept the oil shop (now Davies's) at the corner of Featherstone-building, in Holborn. F. was a tall grave person, lofty in speech, and had pretensions above his rank. He associated in those days with John Palmer, the comedian, whose gait and bearing he seemed to copy; if John (which is quite as likely) did not rather borrow somewhat of his manner from my godfather. He was also known to, and visited by, Sheridan. It was to his house in Holborn that young Brinsley brought his first wife on her elopement with him from a boarding-school at Bath—the beautiful Maria Linley. My parents were present (over a quadrille table) when he arrived in the evening with his harmonious charge.—From either of these connexions it may be inferred that my godfather could command an order for the then Drury-lane theatre at pleasure—and, indeed, a pretty liberal issue of those cheap billets, in Brinsley's easy autograph, I have heard him say was the sole remuneration which he had received for many years' nightly illumination of the orchestra and various avenues of that theatre—and he was content it should be so. The honour of Sheridan's familiarity—or supposed familiarity—was better to my godfather than money.

F. was the most gentlemanly of oilmen; grandiloquent, yet courteous. His delivery of the commonest matters of fact was Cicconian. He had two Latin words almost constantly in his mouth (how odd sounds Latin from an oilman's lips!), which my better knowledge since has enabled me to correct. In strict pronunciation they should have been sounded *vice versa*—but in those young years they impressed me with more awe than they would now do, read aright

from Seneca or Varro—in his own peculiar pronunciation, monosyllabically elaborated, or Anglicized, into something like *verse verse*. By an imposing manner, and the help of these distorted syllables, he climbed (but that was little) to the highest parochial honours which St. Andrew's has to bestow.

He is dead—and thus much I thought due to his memory, both for my first orders (little wondrous talismans!—slight keys, and insignificant to outward sight, but opening to me more than Arabian paradises!) and moreover, that by his testamentary beneficence I came into possession of the only landed property which I could ever call my own—situate near the road-way village of pleasant Puckeridge, in Hertfordshire. When I journeyed down to take possession, and planted foot on my own ground, the stately habits of the donor descended upon me, and I strode (shall I confess the vanity?) with larger paces over my allotment of three quarters of an acre, with its commodious mansion in the midst, with the feeling of an English freeholder that all betwixt sky and centre was my own. The estate has passed into more prudent hands, and nothing but an agrarian can restore it.

In those days were pit orders. Beshrew the uncomfortable manager who abolished them!—with one of these we went. I remember the waiting at the door—not that which is left—but between that and an inner door in shelter—O when shall I be such an expectant again!—with the cry of nonpareils, an indispensable play-house accompaniment in those days. As near as I can recollect, the fashionable pronunciation of the theatrical fruiteresses then was, “Chase some oranges, chase some numparels, chase a bill of the

play;—chase *pro chuse*. But when we got in, and I beheld the green curtain that veiled a heaven to my imagination, which was soon to be disclosed—the breathless anticipations I endured! I had seen something like it in the plate prefixed to Troilus and Cressida, in Rowe's Shakspeare—the tent scene with Diomede—and a sight of that plate can always bring back in a measure the feeling of that evening.—The boxes at that time, full of well-dressed women of quality, projected over the pit; and the pilasters reaching down were adorned with a glistening substance (I know not what) under glass (as it seemed), resembling—a homely fancy—but I judged it to be sugar-candy—yet to my raised imagination, divested of its homelier qualities, it appeared a glorified candy!—The orchestra lights at length arose, those “fair Auroras!” Once the bell sounded. It was to ring out yet once again—and, incapable of the anticipation, I reposed my shut eyes in a sort of resignation upon the maternal lap. It rang the second time. The curtain drew up—I was not past six years old—and the play was Artaxerxes!

I had dabbled a little in the Universal History—the ancient part of it—and here was the court of Persia. It was being admitted to a sight of the past. I took no proper interest in the action going on, for I understood not its import—but I heard the word Darius, and I was in the midst of Daniel. All feeling was absorbed in vision. Gorgeous vests, gardens, palaces, princesses, passed before me. I knew not players. I was in Persepolis for the time; and the burning idol of their devotion almost converted me into a worshipper. I was awe-struck, and believed those significations to be something more than elemental

fires. It was all enchantment and a dream. No such pleasure has since visited me but in dreams.—Harlequin's Invasion followed; where, I remember, the transformation of the magistrates into reverend beldams seemed to me a piece of grave historic justice, and the tailor carrying his own head to be as sober a verity as the legend of St. Denys.

The next play to which I was taken was the *Lady of the Manor*, of which, with the exception of some scenery, very faint traces are left in my memory. It was followed by a pantomime, called *Lun's Ghost*—a satiric touch, I apprehend, upon Rich, not long since dead—but to my apprehension (too sincere for satire), Lun was as remote a piece of antiquity as Lud—the father of a line of Harlequins—transmitting his dagger of lath (the wooden sceptre) through countless ages. I saw the primeval Motley come from his silent tomb in a ghastly vest of white patch-work, like the apparition of a dead rainbow. So Harlequins (thought I) look when they are dead.

My third play followed in quick succession. It was the *Way of the World*. I think I must have sat at it as grave as a judge; for, I remember, the hysteric affectations of good Lady Wishfort affected me like some solemn tragic passion. *Robinson Crusoe* followed; in which Crusoe, man Friday, and the parrot, were as good and authentic as in the story.—The clownery and pantaloony of these pantomimes have clean passed out of my head. I believe, I no more laughed at them, than at the same age I should have been disposed to laugh at the grotesque Gothic heads (seeming to me then replete with devout meaning) that gape, and grin, in stone around the inside of the old Round Church (my church) of the Templars.

I saw these plays in the season 1781-2, when I was from six to seven years old. After the intervention of six or seven other years (for at school all play-going was inhibited) I again entered the doors of a theatre. That old Artaxerxes evening had never done ringing in my fancy. I expected the same feelings to come again with the same occasion. But we differ from ourselves less at sixty and sixteen, than the latter does from six. In that interval what had I not lost! At the first period I knew nothing, understood nothing, discriminated nothing. I felt all, loved all, wondered all—

Was nourished, I could not tell how—

I had left the temple a devotee, and was returned a rationalist. The same things were there materially; but the emblem, the reference, was gone!—The green curtain was no longer a veil, drawn between two worlds, the unfolding of which was to bring back past ages, to present “a royal ghost,”—but a certain quantity of green baize, which was to separate the audience for a given time from certain of their fellow-men who were to come forward and pretend those parts. The lights—the orchestra lights—came up a clumsy machinery. The first ring, and the second ring, was now but a trick of the prompter’s bell—which had been, like the note of the cuckoo, a phantom of a voice, no hand seen or guessed at which ministered to its warning. The actors were men and women painted. I thought the fault was in them; but it was in myself, and the alteration which those many centuries—of six short twelvemonths—had wrought in me.—Perhaps it was fortunate for me that the play of the evening was but an indifferent comedy,

as it gave me time to crop some unreasonable expectations, which might have interfered with the genuine emotions with which I was soon after enabled to enter upon the first appearance to me of Mrs. Siddons in *Isabella*. Comparison and retrospection soon yielded to the present attraction of the scene; and the theatre became to me, upon a new stock, the most delightful of recreations.

---

The story which Lamb tells of *Barbara S—* was substantially true of Fanny Kelly, the actress, but all the details are changed. The note at the end of the Essay, mentioning Mrs. Crawford, is meant to be misleading.

#### BARBARA S—

ON the noon of the 14th of November, 1743 or 4, I forget which it was, just as the clock had struck one, Barbara S—, with her accustomed punctuality ascended the long rambling staircase, with awkward interposed landing-places, which led to the office, or rather a sort of box with a desk in it, whereat sat the then Treasurer of (what few of our readers may remember) the Old Bath Theatre. All over the island it was the custom, and remains so I believe to this day, for the players to receive their weekly stipend on the Saturday. It was not much that Barbara had to claim.

This little maid had just entered her eleventh year; but her important station at the theatre, as it seemed to her, with the benefits which she felt to accrue from her pious application of her small earnings, had given an air of womanhood to her steps and to her be-

haviour. You would have taken her to have been at least five years older.

Till latterly she had merely been employed in choruses, or where children were wanted to fill up the scene. But the manager, observing a diligence and adroitness in her above her age, had for some few months past intrusted to her the performance of whole parts. You may guess the self-consequence of the promoted Barbara. She had already drawn tears in young Arthur; had rallied Richard with infantine petulance in the Duke of York; and in her turn had rebuked that petulance when she was Prince of Wales. She would have done the elder child in Morton's pathetic after-piece to the life; but as yet the "Children in the Wood" was not.

Long after this little girl was grown an aged woman, I have seen some of these small parts, each making two or three pages at most, copied out in the rudest hand of the then prompter, who doubtless transcribed a little more carefully and fairly for the grown-up tragedy ladies of the establishment. But such as they were, blotted and scrawled, as for a child's use, she kept them all; and in the zenith of her after reputation it was a delightful sight to behold them bound up in costliest Morocco, each single—each small part making a *book*—with fine clasps, gilt-splashed, &c. She had conscientiously kept them as they had been delivered to her; not a blot had been effaced or tampered with. They were precious to her for their affecting remembrancings. They were her principia, her rudiments; the elementary atoms; the little steps by which she pressed forward to perfection. "What," she would say, "could Indian rubber, or a pumice stone, have done for these darlings?"

I am in no hurry to begin my story—indeed, I have little or none to tell—so I will just mention an observation of hers connected with that interesting time.

Not long before she died I had been discoursing with her on the quantity of real present emotion which a great tragic performer experiences during acting. I ventured to think, that though in the first instance such players must have possessed the feelings which they so powerfully called up in others, yet by frequent repetition those feelings must become deadened in great measure, and the performer trust to the memory of past emotion, rather than express a present one. She indignantly repelled the notion, that with a truly great tragedian the operation, by which such effects were produced upon an audience, could ever degrade itself into what was purely mechanical. With much delicacy, avoiding to instance in her *self*-experience, she told me, that so long ago as when she used to play the part of the Little Son to Mrs. Porter's Isabella, (I think it was) when that impressive actress has been bending over her in some heart-rending colloquy, she has felt real hot tears come trickling from her, which (to use her powerful expression) have perfectly scalded her back.

I am not quite so sure that it was Mrs. Porter; but it was some great actress of that day. The name is indifferent; but the fact of the scalding tears I most distinctly remember.

I was always fond of the society of players, and am not sure that an impediment in my speech (which certainly kept me out of the pulpit), even more than certain personal disqualifications, which are often got over in that profession, did not prevent me at one time of life from adopting it. I have had the honour

(I must ever call it) once to have been admitted to the tea-table of Miss Kelly. I have played at serious whist with Mr. Liston. I have chatted with ever good-humoured Mrs. Charles Kemble. I have conversed as friend to friend with her accomplished husband. I have been indulged with a classical conference with Macready; and with a sight of the Player-picture gallery, at Mr. Matthew's, when the kind owner, to remunerate me for my love of the old actors (whom he loves so much) went over it with me, supplying to his capital collection, what alone the artist could not give them—voice; and their living motion. Old tones, half-faded, of Dodd and Parsons, and Baddeley, have lived again for me at his bidding. Only Edwin he could not restore to me. I have supped with ——; but I am growing a coxcomb.

As I was about to say—at the desk of the then treasurer of the old Bath Theatre—not Diamond's—presented herself the little Barbara S——.

The parents of Barbara had been in reputable circumstances. The father had practised, I believe, as an apothecary in the town. But his practice from causes which I feel my own infirmity too sensibly that way to arraign—or perhaps from that pure infelicity which accompanies some people in their walk through life, and which it is impossible to lay at the door of imprudence—was now reduced to nothing. They were in fact in the very teeth of starvation, when the manager, who knew and respected them in better days, took the little Barbara into his company.

At the period I commenced with, her slender earnings were the sole support of the family, including two younger sisters. I must throw a veil over some

mortifying circumstances. Enough to say, that her Saturday's pittance was the only chance of a Sunday's (generally their only) meal of meat.

One thing I will only mention, that in some child's part, where in her theatrical character she was to sup off a roast fowl (O joy to Barbara!) some comic actor, who was for the night eaterer for this dainty—in the misguided humour of his part, threw over the dish such a quantity of salt (O grief and pain of heart to Barbara!) that when she crammed a portion of it into her mouth, she was obliged sputteringly to reject it; and what with shame of her ill-acted part, and pain of real appetite at missing such a dainty, her little heart sobbed almost to breaking, till a flood of tears, which the well-fed spectators were totally unable to comprehend, mercifully relieved her.

This was the little starved, meritorious maid, who stood before old Ravenscroft, the treasurer, for her Saturday's payment.

Ravenscroft was a man, I have heard many old theatrical people besides herself say, of all men least calculated for a treasurer. He had no head for accounts, paid away at random, kept scarce any books, and summing up at the week's end, if he found himself a pound or so deficient, blest himself that it was no worse.

Now Barbara's weekly stipend was a bare half-guinea.—By mistake he popped into her hand—a whole one.

Barbara tripped away.

She was entirely unconscious at first of the mistake: God knows, Ravenscroft would never have discovered it.

But when she had got down to the first of those

uncouth landing-places, she became sensible of an unusual weight of metal pressing her little hand.

Now mark the dilemma.

She was by nature a good child. From her parents and those about her she had imbibed no contrary influence. But then they had taught her nothing. Poor men's smoky cabins are not always porticoes of moral philosophy. This little maid had no instinct to evil, but then she might be said to have no fixed principle. She had heard honesty commended, but never dreamed of its application to herself. She thought of it as something which concerned grown-up people—men and women. She had never known temptation, or thought of preparing resistance against it.

Her first impulse was to go back to the old treasurer, and explain to him his blunder. He was *already so confused with age, besides a natural want of punctuality*, that she would have had some difficulty in making him understand it. She saw *that* in an instant. And then it was such a bit of money! and then the image of a larger allowance of butcher's meat on their table next day came across her, till her little eyes glistened, and her mouth moistened. But then Mr. Ravenscroft had always been so good-natured, had stood her friend behind the scenes, and even recommended her promotion to some of her little parts. But again the old man was reputed to be worth a world of money. He was supposed to have fifty pounds a year clear of the theatre. And then came staring upon her the figures of her little stockingless and shoeless sisters. And when she looked at her own neat white cotton stockings, which her situation at the theatre had made it indispensable for her mother

to provide for her, with hard straining and pinching from the family stock, and thought how glad she should be to cover their poor feet with the same—and how then they could accompany her to rehearsals, which they had hitherto been precluded from doing, by reason of their unfashionable attire—in these thoughts she reached the second landing-place—the second, I mean, from the top—for there was still another left to traverse.

Now virtue support Barbara!

And that never-failing friend did step in—for at that moment a strength not her own, I have heard her say, was revealed to her—a reason above reasoning—and without her own agency, as it seemed (for she never felt her feet to move), she found herself transported back to the individual desk she had just quitted, and her hand in the old hand of Ravenscroft, who in silence took back the refunded treasure, and who had been sitting (good man) insensible to the lapse of minutes, which to her were anxious ages; and from that moment a deep peace fell upon her heart, and she knew the quality of honesty.

A year or two's unrepining application to her profession brightened up the feet, and the prospects, of her little sisters, set the whole family upon their legs again, and released her from the difficulty of discussing moral dogmas upon a landing-place.

I have heard her say that it was a surprise, not much short of mortification to her, to see the coolness with which the old man pocketed the difference, which had caused her such mortal throes.

This anecdote of herself I had in the year 1800, from the mouth of the late Mrs. Crawford, then sixty-seven years of age (she died soon after); and to her

struggles upon this childish occasion I have sometimes ventured to think her indebted for that power of rending the heart in the representation of conflicting emotions, for which in after years she was considered as little inferior (if at all so in the part of Lady Randolph) even to Mrs. Siddons.

---

*Old China* appeared in the *London Magazine* for March, 1823, and in the *Last Essays of Elia* (first published in a collected edition in 1833).

*Bridget Elia*, as before, is Mary Lamb.

#### OLD CHINA

I HAVE an almost feminine partiality for old china. When I go to see any great house, I inquire for the china-closet, and next for the picture gallery. I cannot defend the order of preference, but by saying, that we have all some taste or other, of too ancient a date to admit of our remembering distinctly that it was an acquired one. I can call to mind the first play, and the first exhibition, that I was taken to; but I am not conscious of a time when china jars and saucers were introduced into my imagination.

I had no repugnance then—why should I now have?—to those little, lawless, azure-tinctured grotesques, that, under the notion of men and women, float about, uncircumscribed by any element, in that world before perspective—a china tea-cup.

I like to see my old friends—whom distance cannot diminish—figuring up in the air (so they appear to our optics), yet on *terra firma* still—for so we must in courtesy interpret that speck of deeper blue, which the decorous artist, to prevent absurdity, has made to spring up beneath their sandals.

I love the men with women's faces, and the women, if possible, with still more womanish expressions.

Here is a young and courtly Mandarin, handing tea to a lady from a salver—two miles off. See how distance seems to set off respect! And here the same lady, or another—for likeness is identity on tea-cups—is stepping into a little fairy boat, moored on the hither side of this calm garden river, with a dainty mincing foot, which in a right angle of incidence (as angles go in our world) must infallibly land her in the midst of a flowery mead—a furlong off on the other side of the same strange stream!

Farther on—if far or near can be predicated of their world—see horses, trees, pagodas, dancing the hays.

Here—a cow and rabbit couchant, and co-extensive—so objects show, seen through the lucid atmosphere of fine Cathay.

I was pointing out to my cousin last evening, over our Hyson (which we are old fashioned enough to drink unmixed still of an afternoon) some of these *speciosa miracula* upon a set of extraordinary old blue china (a recent purchase) which we were now for the first time using; and could not help remarking, how favourable circumstances had been to us of late years, that we could afford to please the eye sometimes with trifles of this sort—when a passing sentiment seemed to over-shade the brows of my companion. I am quick at detecting these summer clouds in Bridget.

“I wish the good old times would come again,” she said, “when we were not quite so rich. I do not mean, that I want to be poor; but there was a middle state;”—so she was pleased to ramble on,—“in which I am sure we were a great deal happier. A purchase

is but a purchase, now that you have money enough and to spare. Formerly it used to be a triumph. When we coveted a cheap luxury good, O! how much ado I had to get you to consent in those times! we were used to have a debate two or three days before, and to weigh the *pro* and *against*, and think what we might spare it out of, and what saving we could hit upon, that should be an equivalent. A thing was worth buying then, when we felt the money that we paid for it.

"Do you remember the brown suit, which you made to hang upon you, till all your friends could shame upon you, it grew so thread-bare—and all because of that *folio Beaumont and Fletcher*, which you dragged home late at night from Barker's in Covent-garden? Do you remember how we eyed it for weeks before we could make up our minds to the purchase, and had not come to a determination till it was near ten o'clock of the Saturday night, when you set off from Islington, fearing you should be too late—and when the old bookseller with some grumbling opened his shop, and by the twinkling taper (for he was setting backwards) lighted out the relic from his dusty treasure—and when you lugged it home, wishing it were twice as cumbersome—and when you presented it to me—and when we were exploring the perfectness of it (*collating* you called it)—and while I was repairing some of the loose leaves with paste, which your impatience would not suffer to be left till day-break—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? or can those neat black clothes which you wear now, and are so careful to keep brushed, since we have become rich and finical, give you half the honest vanity, with which you flaunted it about in that over-worn suit—your old

corbeau—for four or five weeks longer than you should have done, to pacify your conscience for the mighty sum of fifteen—or sixteen shillings was it?—a great affair we thought it then—which you had lavished on the old folio. Now you can afford to buy any book that pleases you, but I do not see that you ever bring me home any nice old purchases now.

“When you came home with twenty apologies for laying out a less number of shillings upon that print after Lionardo, which we christened the ‘Lady Blanch;’ when you looked at the purchase, and thought of the money—and thought of the money, and looked again at the picture—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? Now, you have nothing to do but to walk into Colnaghi’s, and buy a wilderness of Lionardos. Yet do you?”

“Then, do you remember our pleasant walks to Enfield, and Potter’s Bar, and Waltham, when we had a holyday—holydays, and all other fun, are gone, now we are rich—and the little hand-basket in which I used to deposit our day’s fare of savoury cold lamb and salad—and how you would pry about at noon-tide for some decent house, where we might go in, and produce our store—only paying for the ale that you must call for—and speculate upon the looks of the landlady, and whether she was likely to allow us a table-cloth—and wish for such another honest hostess as Izaak Walton has described many a one on the pleasant banks of the Lea, when he went a fishing—and sometimes they would prove obliging enough, and sometimes they would look grudgingly upon us—but we had cheerful looks still for one another, and would eat our plain food savorily, scarcely grudging Piscator his Trout Hall? Now, when we go out a

day's pleasuring, which is seldom moreover, we *ride* part of the way—and go into a fine inn, and order the best of dinners, never debating the expense—which, after all, never has half the relish of those chance country snaps, when we were at the mercy of uncertain usage, and a precarious welcome.

“ You are too proud to see a play anywhere now but in the pit. Do you remember where it was we used to sit, when we saw the battle of Hexham, and the surrender of Calais, and Bannister and Mrs. Bland in the *Children in the Wood*—when we squeezed out our shillings a-piece to sit three or four times in a season in the one-shilling gallery—where you felt all the time that you ought not to have brought me—and more strongly I felt obligation to you for having brought me—and the pleasure was the better for a little shame—and when the curtain drew up, what cared we for our place in the house, or what mattered it where we were sitting, when our thoughts were with *Rosalind in Arden*, or with *Viola at the Court of Illyria*? You used to say, that the gallery was the best place of all for enjoying a play socially—that the relish of such exhibitions must be in proportion to the infrequency of going—that the company we met there, not being in general readers of plays, were obliged to attend the more, and did attend, to what was going on, on the stage—because a word lost would have been a chasm, which it was impossible for them to fill up. With such reflections we consoled our pride then—and I appeal to you, whether, as a woman, I met generally with less attention and accommodation, than I have done since in more expensive situations in the house? The getting in indeed, and the crowding up those inconvenient staircases, was bad enough,—but there

was still a law of civility to women recognised to quite as great an extent as we ever found in the other passages—and how a little difficulty overcome heightened the snug seat, and the play, afterwards! Now we can only pay our money, and walk in. You cannot see, you say, in the galleries now. I am sure we saw, and heard too, well enough then—but sight, and all, I think, is gone with our poverty.

“There was pleasure in eating strawberries, before they became quite common—in the first dish of peas, while they were yet dear—to have them for a nice supper, a treat. What treat can we have now? If we were to treat ourselves now—that is, to have dainties a little above our means, it would be selfish and wicked. It is the very little more that we allow ourselves beyond what the actual poor can get at, that makes what I call a treat—when two people living together, as we have done, now and then indulge themselves in a cheap luxury, which both like; while each apologises, and is willing to take both halves of the blame to his single share. I see no harm in people making much of themselves in that sense of the word. It may give them a hint how to make much of others. But now—what I mean by the word—we never do make much of ourselves. None but the poor can do it. I do not mean the veriest poor of all, but persons as we were, just above poverty.

“I know what you were going to say, that it is mighty pleasant at the end of the year to make all meet—and much ado we used to have every Thirty-first Night of December to account for our exceedings—many a long face did you make over your puzzled accounts, and in contriving to make it out how we had spent so much—or that we had not spent so much

—or that it was impossible we should spend so much next year—and still we found our slender capital decreasing—but then, betwixt ways, and projects, and compromises of one sort or another, and talk of curtailing this charge, and doing without that for the future—and the hope that youth brings, and laughing spirits (in which you were never poor till now,) we pocketed up our loss, and in conclusion, with ‘lusty brimmers’ (as you used to quote it out of *hearty cheerful Mr. Cotton*, as you called him), we used to welcome in the ‘coming guest.’ Now we have no reckoning at all at the end of the old year—no flattering promises about the new year doing better for us.”

Bridget is so sparing of her speech on most occasions, that when she gets into a rhetorical vein, I am careful how I interrupt it. I could not help, however, smiling at the phantom of wealth which her dear imagination had conjured up out of a clear income of poor — hundred pounds a year. “It is true we were happier when we were poorer, but we were also younger, my cousin. I am afraid we must put up with the excess, for if we were to shake the superfluous into the sea, we should not much mend ourselves. That we had much to struggle with, as we grew up together, we have reason to be most thankful. It strengthened, and knit our compact closer. We could never have been what we have been to each other, if we had always had the sufficiency which you now complain of. The resisting power—those natural dilations of the youthful spirit, which circumstances cannot straiten—with us are long since passed away. Competence to age is supplementary youth; a sorry supplement indeed, but I fear the best that is to be had. We must ride, where we formerly walked: live

better, and lie softer—and shall be wise to do so—than we had means to do in those good old days you speak of. Yet could those days return—could you and I once more walk our thirty miles a-day—could Bannister and Mrs. Bland again be young, and you and I be young to see them—could the good old one shilling gallery days return—they are dreams, my cousin, now—but could you and I at this moment, instead of this quiet argument, by our well-carpeted fireside, sitting on this luxurious sofa—be once more struggling up those inconvenient stair-cases, pushed about, and squeezed, and elbowed by the poorest rabble of poor gallery scramblers—could I once more hear those anxious shrieks of yours—and the delicious *Thank God, we are safe*, which always followed when the topmost stair, conquered, let in the first light of the whole cheerful theatre down beneath us—I know not the fathom line that ever touched a descent so deep as I would be willing to bury more wealth in than Cræsus had, or the great Jew R—— is supposed to have, to purchase it. And now do just look at that merry little Chinese waiter holding an umbrella, big enough for a bed-tester, over the head of that pretty insipid half-Madona-ish chit of a lady in that very blue summer-house.”

## FRIENDS: DYER, MANNING

Of his many friends, Lamb loved and admired most Coleridge, his old schoolfellow, but for various reasons his later letters to him are not the most interesting from our point of view. Two of the earlier letters have been given already (pp. 40, and 59).

Manning, son of the Rector of Diss, in Norfolk, was introduced to Lamb by Lloyd, and soon became one of his most valued friends. He was a Cambridge scholar, and was interested in mathematics and Chinese. In 1806 he went as a doctor to Canton, and in 1811-12 he visited Lhasa, being the first Englishman to get there. To him Lamb wrote some of his finest letters.

Dyer was an old Christ's Hospital boy. He had attracted the attention of Askew, the physician to Christ's Hospital, who lent him books and encouraged his Greek studies. He went to Cambridge, and became totally immersed in scholarship. After acting for a time as schoolmaster and tutor he came to London and earned a living as a hack-writer for the booksellers. His eccentricities caused endless amusement—always kindly—to his friends.

## LETTER

TO MANNING.

[August 24, 1800.]

Dear Manning,—I am going to ask a favour of you, and am at a loss how to do it in the most delicate

manner. For this purpose I have been looking into Pliny's Letters, who is noted to have had the best grace in begging of all the ancients (I read him in the elegant translation of Mr. Melmoth), but not finding any case there exactly similar with mine, I am constrained to beg in my own barbarian way. To come to the point then, and hasten into the middle of things, have you a copy of your Algebra to give away? I do not ask it for myself; I have too much reverence for the Black Arts ever to approach thy circle, illustrious Trismegist! But that worthy man and excellent Poet, George Dyer, made me a visit yesterday, on purpose to borrow one, supposing, rationally enough I must say, that you had made me a present of one before this; the omission of which I take to have proceeded only from negligence; but it is a fault. I could lend him no assistance. You must know he is just now diverted from the pursuit of BELL LETTERS by a paradox, which he has heard his friend Frend (that learned mathematician) maintain, that the negative quantities of mathematicians were *meræ nugæ*, things scarcely in *rerum naturâ*, and smacking too much of mystery for gentlemen of Mr. Frend's clear Unitarian capacity. However, the dispute once set a-going has seized violently on George's perieraniek; and it is necessary for his health that he should speedily come to a resolution of his doubts. He goes about teasing his friends with his new mathematics; he even frantically talks of purchasing Manning's Algebra, which shows him far gone, for, to my knowledge, he has not been master of seven shillings a good time. George's pockets and . . . 's brains are two things in nature which do not abhor a vacuum . . . Now, if you could step in, in this trembling

suspense of his reason, and he should find on Saturday morning, lying for him at the Porter's Lodge, Clifford's Inn,—his safest address—Manning's Algebra, with a neat manuscriptum in the blank leaf, running thus, FROM THE AUTHOR! it might save his wits and restore the unhappy author to those studies of poetry and criticism, which are at present suspended, to the infinite regret of the whole literary world. N.B.—Dirty books [? backs], smeared leaves, and dogs' ears, will be rather a recommendation than otherwise. N.B.—He must have the book as soon as possible, or nothing can withhold him from madly purchasing the book on tick. . . . Then shall we see him sweetly restored to the chair of Longinus—to dictate in smooth and modest phrase the laws of verse; to prove that Theocritus first introduced the Pastoral, and Virgil and Pope brought it to its perfection; that Gray and Mason (who always hunt in couples in George's brain) have shown a great deal of poetical fire in their lyric poetry; that Aristotle's rules are not to be servilely followed, which George has shown to have imposed great shackles upon modern genius. His poems, I find, are to consist of two vols.—reasonable octavo; and a third book will exclusively contain criticisms, in which he asserts he has gone *pretty deeply* into the laws of blank verse and rhyme—epic poetry, dramatic and pastoral ditto—all which is to come out before Christmas. But above all he has *touched* most *deeply* upon the Drama, comparing the English with the modern German stage, their merits and defects. Apprehending that his *studies* (not to mention his *turn* which I take to be chiefly towards the lyrical poetry) hardly qualified him for these disquisitions, I modestly inquired what plays he had read? I found

by George's reply that he *had* read Shakspeare, but that was a good while since: he calls him a great but irregular genius, which I think to be an original and just remark. (Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, Ben Jonson, Shirley, Marlowe, Ford, and the worthies of Dodsley's Collection—he confessed he had read none of them, but professed his *intention* of looking through them all, so as to be able to *touch* upon them in his book.) So Shakspeare, Otway, and I believe Rowe, to whom he was naturally directed by Johnson's Lives, and these not read lately, are to stand him in stead of a general knowledge of the subject. God bless his dear absurd head!

By the by, did I not write you a letter with something about an invitation in it?—but let that pass; I suppose it is not agreeable.

N.B. It would not be amiss if you were to accompany your *present* with a dissertation on negative quantities.

C. L.

## LETTER

TO MANNING.

December 27th, 1800.

At length George Dyer's phrenesis has come to a crisis; he is raging and furiously mad. I waited upon the heathen, Thursday was a se'nnight; the first symptom which struck my eye and gave me incontrovertible proof of the fatal truth was a pair of nankeen pantaloons four times too big for him, which the said Heathen did pertinaciously affirm to be new.

They were absolutely ingrained with the accumulated dirt of ages; but he affirmed them to be clean.

He was going to visit a lady that was nice about those things, and that's the reason he wore nankeen that day. And then he danced, and capered, and fidgeted, and pulled up his pantaloons, and hugged his intolerable flannel vestment closer about his poetic loins; anon he gave it loose to the zephyrs which plentifully insinuate their tiny bodies through every crevice, door, window or wainscot, expressly formed for the exclusion of such impertinents. Then he caught at a proof sheet, and caught up a laundress's bill instead—made a dart at Blomfield's Poems and threw them in agony aside. I could not bring him to one direct reply; he could not maintain his jumping mind in a right line for the title of a moment by Clifford's Inn clock. He must go to the printer's immediately—the most unlucky accident—he had struck off five hundred impressions of his Poems, which were ready for delivery to subscribers, and the Preface must all be expunged. There were eighty pages of Preface, and not till that morning had he discovered that in the very first page of said Preface he had set out with a principle of Criticism fundamentally wrong, which vitiated all his following reasoning. The Preface must be expunged, although it cost him £30—the lowest calculation, taking in paper and printing! In vain have his real friends remonstrated against this Midsummer madness. George is as obstinate as a Primitive Christian—and wards and parries off all our thrusts with one unanswerable fence;—"Sir, it's of great consequence that the *world* is not *mised*!"

As for the other Professor, he has actually begun to dive into Tavernier and Chardin's *Persian Travels* for a story, to form a new drama for the sweet tooth

of this fastidious age. Hath not Bethlehem College a fair action for non-residents against such professors? Are poets so *few* in *this age*, that he must write poetry? Is *morals* a subject so exhausted, that he must quit that line? Is the metaphysic well (without a bottom) drained dry?

If I can guess at the wicked pride of the Professor's heart, I would take a shrewd wager that he disdains ever again to dip his pen in *Prose*. Adieu, ye splendid theories! Farewell, dreams of political justice! Lawsuits, where I was counsel for Archbishop Fénelon *versus* my own mother, in the famous fire cause!

Vanish from my mind, professors, one and all! I have metal more attractive on foot.

Man of many snipes,—I will sup with thee, Deo volente et diabolo nolente, on Monday night the 5th of January, in the new year, and crush a cup to the infant century.

A word or two of my progress. Embark at six o'clock in the morning, with a fresh gale, on a Cambridge one-decker; very cold till eight at night; land at St. Mary's light-house, muffins and coffee upon table (or any other curious production of Turkey or both Indies), snipes exactly at nine, punch to commence at ten, with *argument*; difference of opinion is expected to take place about eleven; perfect unanimity, with some haziness and dimness, before twelve.—N.B. My single affection is not so singly wedded to snipes; but the curious and epicurean eye would also take a pleasure in beholding a delicate and well-chosen assortment of teals, ortolans, the unctuous and palate-soothing flesh of geese wild and tame, nightingales' brains, the sensorium of a young sucking-

pleased my friends, and was much, will be I leave to  
 the judgment of you and the work of tomorrow.

C. L. MAN.

# LETTER

TO THE EDITOR.

Nov. 1826.

Dear Mrs. H.,—Sitting down to write a letter to  
 you, I am greatly indebted to Mary, that you must  
 accept me as her proxy. You have seen our house.  
 What I am telling is almost entirely true. Yesterday week,  
 George D. was killed by a mob, at one o'clock, (bright  
 moon and no stars) as to do with Mrs. Barbauld at  
 Newington. He sat with Mary about half an hour,  
 and then home. He said she had gone out from her  
 sister's window, but while the living sight of him,  
 ran up to a flight to Mrs. G. D., instead of  
 keeping the dog that leads to the gate, had deliberately,  
 and in road, in broad open day, marched into the  
 New River. He had not his spectacles on, and you  
 know how often. When helped him out, they could  
 hardly tell, but before long they got him out,  
 dashed thro' and thro'. A mob collected by that  
 time, and accompanied him in. "Send for the  
 Doctor!" they said: and a no-good fellow, dirty and  
 drunk, was fetched from the Public House at the end,  
 where it seems he lurks, for the sake of picking up  
 water patients, having formerly had a medal from the  
 Humane Society for some reason. By his advice, the  
 patient was put between blankets; and when I came  
 home at four to dinner, I found G. D. a-bed, and  
 raving, light-headed with the brandy-and-water which  
 the doctor had administered. He sung, laughed,  
 whimpered, screamed, babbled of guardian angels,  
 would get up and go home; but we kept him there by

force; and by next morning he departed sobered, and seems to have received no injury. All my friends are open-mouthed about having paling before the river, but I cannot see that, because a . . . lunatic chooses to walk into a river with his eyes open at midday, I am any the more likely to be drowned in it, coming home at midnight.

I have had the honour of dining at the Mansion House, on Thursday last, by special card from the Lord Mayor, who never saw my face, nor I his; and all from being a writer in a magazine! The dinner costly, served on massy plate, champagne, pines, &c.; forty-seven present, among whom the Chairman and two other directors of the India Company. There's for you! and got away pretty sober! Quite saved my credit!

We continue to like our house prodigiously. Does Mary Hazlitt go on with her novel, or has she begun another? I would not discourage her, tho' we continue to think it (so far) in its present state not saleable.

Our kind remembrances to her and hers and you and yours.—Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

---

Lamb used this last adventure of Dyer's in the essay *Amicus Redivivus*, which appeared in the *London Magazine* for December, 1823, and was reprinted in the *Last Essays of Elia* (1833).

### AMICUS REDIVIVUS

Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep  
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?

I DO not know when I have experienced a stranger sensation, than on seeing my old friend G. D., who

and for a few days he was in a state of great anxiety, but he was at last relieved by the arrival of Dr. Trist, who, by his skill and judgment, was able to cure him of his complaint. He was then in a state of great health, and he was able to go on with his work as usual.

At the same time, he was in a state of great anxiety, but he was at last relieved by the arrival of Dr. Trist, who, by his skill and judgment, was able to cure him of his complaint. He was then in a state of great health, and he was able to go on with his work as usual.

He was then in a state of great health, and he was able to go on with his work as usual. He was then in a state of great health, and he was able to go on with his work as usual. He was then in a state of great health, and he was able to go on with his work as usual. He was then in a state of great health, and he was able to go on with his work as usual.

And here I cannot but do justice to the wisdom and cool of sundry physicians, who, after waiting a little too late to participate in the benefits of the remedy, in philanthropic charity came thronging to communicate their advice as to the recovery, prescribing variously the application, or non-application, of salt, &c., to the person of the patient. Life meantime was ebbing fast away, amidst the strife of conflicting judgments, when one, more sagacious than the rest, by a bright thought, proposed sending for the Doctor Trist as the counsel was, and impossible, as one should think, to be missed on,—shall I confess?—in this emergency, it was to me as if an Angel had spoken. Great previous exertions—and mine had not been

inconsiderable—are commonly followed by a debility of purpose. This was a moment of irresolution.

MONOCULUS—for so, in default of catching his true name, I choose to designate the medical gentleman who now appeared—is a grave, middle-aged person, who, without having studied at the college, or truckled to the pedantry of a diploma, hath employed a great portion of his valuable time in experimental processes upon the bodies of unfortunate fellow-creatures, in whom the vital spark, to mere vulgar thinking, would seem extinct, and lost for ever. He omitteth no occasion of obtruding his services, from a case of common surfeit-suffocation to the ignobler obstructions, sometimes induced by a too wilful application of the plant *Cannabis* outwardly. But though he declineth not altogether these drier extinctions, his occupation tendeth for the most part to water-practice; for the convenience of which, he hath judiciously fixed his quarters near the grand repository of the stream mentioned, where, day and night, from his little watch-tower, at the Middleton's-Head, he listeneth to detect the wrecks of drowned mortality—partly, as he saith, to be upon the spot—and partly, because the liquids which he useth to prescribe to himself and his patients, on these distressing occasions, are ordinarily more conveniently to be found at these common hostleries, than in the shops and phials of the apothecaries. His ear hath arrived to such finesse by practice, that it is reported, he can distinguish a plunge at a half furlong distance; and can tell, if it be casual or deliberate. He weareth a medal, suspended over a suit, originally of a sad brown, but which, by time, and frequency of nightly divings, has been dinged into a true professional sable. He



of tiles at Trumpington, and of heavier tomes at Pembroke—by studious watchings, inducing frightful vigilance—by want, and the fear of want, and all the sore throbbings of the learned head.—Anon, he would burst out into little fragments of chaunting—of songs long ago—ends of deliverance-hymns, not remembered before since childhood, but coming up now, when his heart was made tender as a child's—for the *tremor cordis*, in the retrospect of a recent deliverance, as in a case of impending danger, acting upon an innocent heart, will produce a self-tenderness, which we should do ill to christen cowardice; and Shakspeare, in the latter crisis, has made his good Sir Hugh to remember the sitting by Babylon, and to mutter of shallow rivers.

Waters of Sir Hugh Middleton—what a spark you were like to have extinguished for ever! Your salubrious streams to this City, for now near two centuries, would hardly have atoned for what you were in a moment washing away. Mockery of a river—liquid artifice—wretched conduit! henceforth rank with canals, and sluggish aqueducts. Was it for this, that, smit in boyhood with the explorations of that Abyssinian traveller, I paced the vales of Amwell to explore your tributary springs, to trace your salutary waters sparkling through green Hertfordshire, and cultured Enfield parks?—Ye have no swans—no Naiads—no river God—or did the benevolent hoary aspect of my friend tempt ye to suck him in, that ye also might have the tutelary genius of your waters?

Had he been drowned in Cam there would have been some consonancy in it; but what willows had ye to wave and rustle over his moist sepulture?—or, having no *name*, besides that unmeaning assumption of *eternal novity*, did ye think to get one by the noble

prize, and henceforth to be termed the STREAM DYERIAN?

And could such spacious virtue find a grave  
Beneath the imposthumped bubble of a wave?

I protest, George, you shall not venture out again—no, not by daylight—without a sufficient pair of spectacles—in your musing moods especially. Your absence of mind we have borne, till your presence of body came to be called in question by it. You shall not go wandering into Euripus with Aristotle, if we can help it. Fie, man, to turn dipper at your years, after your many tracts in favour of sprinkling only!

I have nothing but water in my head o' nights since this frightful accident. Sometimes I am with Clarence in his dream. At others, I behold Christian beginning to sink, and crying out to his good brother Hopeful (that is to me), "I sink in deep waters; the billows go over my head, all the waves go over me. Selah." Then I have before me Palinurus, just letting go the steerage. I cry out too late to save. Next follow—a mournful procession—*suicidal faces*, saved against their wills from drowning; dolefully trailing a length of reluctant gratefulness, with ropy weeds pendant from locks of watchet hue—constrained Lazari—Pluto's half-subjects—stolen fees from the grave—bilking Charon of his fare. At their head Arion—or is it G. D.?—in his singing garments marcheth singly, with harp in hand, and votive garland, which Machaon (or Dr. Hawes) snatcheth straight, intending to suspend it to the stern God of Sea. Then follow dismal streams of Lethe, in which the half-drenched on earth are constrained to drown downright, by wharfs where Ophelia twice acts her muddy death.

And, doubtless, there is some notice in that invisible

world, when one of us approacheth (as my friend did so lately) to their inexorable precincts. When a soul knocks once, twice, at death's door, the sensation aroused within the palace must be considerable; and the grim Feature, by modern science so often dispossessed of his prey, must have learned by this time to pity Tantalus.

A pulse assuredly was felt along the line of the Elysian shades, when the near arrival of G. D. was announced by no equivocal indications. From their seats of Asphodel arose the gentler and the graver ghosts—poet, or historian—of Grecian or of Roman lore—to crown with unfading chaplets the half-finished love-labours of their unwearied scholiast. Him Markland expected—him Tyrwhitt hoped to encounter—him the sweet lyrist of Peter House, whom he had barely seen upon earth,<sup>1</sup> with newest airs prepared to greet —; and, patron of the gentle Christ's boy,—who should have been his patron through life—the mild Askew, with longing aspirations, leaned foremost from his venerable Æsculapian chair, to welcome into that happy company the matured virtues of the man; whose tender scions in the boy he himself upon earth had so prophetically fed and watered.

## LETTER

TO MANNING.

[Dated at end.]

My dear Manning,—The general scope of your letter afforded no indications of insanity, but some particular point raised a scruple. For God's sake don't think any more of "Independent Tartary." What have you to do among such Ethiopians? Is

<sup>1</sup>GRAIUM tantum vidit.

there no *lineal descendant* of Prester John? Is the chair empty. Is the sword unswayed?—depend upon't they'll never make you their king, as long as any branch of that great stock is remaining. I tremble for your Christianity. They'll certainly circumcise you. Read Sir John Maundevill's travels to cure you, or come over to England. There is a Tartar-man now exhibiting at Exeter Change. Come and talk with him, and hear what he says first. Indeed, he is no very favourable specimen of his Countrymen! But perhaps the best thing you can do, is to *try* to get the idea out of your head. For this purpose repeat to yourself every night, after you have said your prayers, the words Independent Tartary, Independent Tartary, two or three times, and associate with them the *idea of oblivion* ('tis Hartley's method with obstinate memories), or say, Independent, Independent, have I not already got an *Independence*? That was a clever way of the old puritans—pun-divinity. My dear friend, think what a sad pity it would be to bury such *parts* in heathen countries, among nasty, unconversable, horse-belching, Tartar people! Some say, they are Cannibals; and then conceive a Tartar-fellow *eating* my friend, and adding the *cool malignity* of mustard and vinegar! I am afraid 'tis the reading of Chaucer has misled you; his foolish stories about Cambuscan and the ring, and the horse of brass. Believe me, there's no such things, 'tis all the poet's *invention*; but if there were such *darling* things as old Chaucer sings, I would *up* behind you on the Horse of Brass, and frisk off for Prester John's Country. But these are all tales; a Horse of Brass never flew, and a King's daughter never talked with Birds! The Tartars, really, are a cold, insipid, smouchey set.

You'll be sadly moped (if you are not eaten) among them. Pray try and cure yourself. Take Hellebore (the counsel is Horace's, 'twas none of my thought originally). Shave yourself oftener. Eat no saffron, for saffron-eaters contract a terrible Tartar-like yellow. Pray, to avoid the fiend. Eat nothing that gives the heart-burn. *Shave the upper lip.* Go about like an European. Read no books of voyages (they are nothing but lies): only now and then a Romance, to keep the fancy under. Above all, don't go to any sights of wild beasts. *That has been your ruin.* Accustom yourself to write familiar letters on common subjects to your friends in England, such as are of a moderate understanding. And think about common things more. I supped last night with Rickman, and met a merry *natural* captain, who pleases himself vastly with once having made a Pun at Otaheite in the O. language. 'Tis the same man who said Shakspeare he liked, because he was so *much of the Gentleman*. Rickman is a man "absolute in all numbers." I think I may one day bring you acquainted, if you do not go to Tartary first; for you'll never come back. Have a care, my dear friend, of Anthropophagi! their stomachs are always craving. 'Tis terrible to be weighed out for 5d. a-pound. To sit at table (the reverse of fishes in Holland), not as a guest, but as a meat.

God bless you: do come to England. Air and exercise may do great things. Talk with some Minister. Why not your father?

God dispose all for the best. I have discharged my duty.

Your sincere fr<sup>d</sup>,

C. LAMB.

19th Feb., 1803, London,

LETTER  
TO MANNING.

May 10, 1806.

My dear Manning—I didn't know what your going was till I shook a last fist with you, and then 'twas just like having shaken hands with a wretch on the fatal scaffold, and when you are down the ladder, you can never stretch out to him again. Mary says you are dead, and there's nothing to do but to leave it to time to do for us in the end what it always does for those who mourn for people in such a case. But she'll see by your letter you are not quite dead. A little kicking and agony, and then——. Martin Burney took me out a walking that evening, and we talked of Mister Manning; and then I came home and smoked for you, and at twelve o'Clock came home Mary and Monkey Louisa from the play, and there was more talk and more smoking, and they all seemed first-rate characters, because they knew a certain person. But what's the use of talking about 'em? By the time you'll have made your escape from the Kalmuks, you'll have staid so long I shall never be able to bring to your mind who Mary was, who will have died about a year before, nor who the Holcrofts were! Me perhaps you will mistake for Phillips, or confound me with Mr. Daw, because you saw us together. Mary (whom you seem to remember yet) is not quite easy that she had not a formal parting from you. I wish it had so happened. But you must bring her a token, a shawl or something, and remember a sprightly little mandarin for our mantle-piece, as a companion to the Child I am going to purchase at the Museum. She says you saw her writings about the other day, and she wishes you should know what they are. She is

doing for Godwin's bookseller twenty of Shakspear's plays, to be made into Children's tales. Six are already done by her, to wit, "The Tempest," "Winter's Tale," "Midsummer Night," "Much Ado," "Two Gentlemen of Verona," and "Cymbeline:" "The Merchant of Venice" is in forwardness. I have done "Othello" and "Macbeth," and mean to do all the tragedies. I think it will be popular among the little people. Besides money. It is to bring in 60 guineas. Mary has done them capitally, I think you'd think. These are the humble amusements we propose, while you are gone to plant the cross of Christ among barbarous Pagan anthropophagi. *Quam homo homini præstat!* but then, perhaps, you'll get murder'd, and we shall die in our beds with a fair literary reputation. Be sure, if you see any of those people whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders, that you make a draught of them. It will be very curious. O Manning, I am serious to sinking almost, when I think that all those evenings, which you have made so pleasant, are gone perhaps for ever. Four years you talk of, maybe ten, and you may come back and find such alterations! Some circumstance may grow up to you or to me, that may be a bar to the return of any such intimacy. I dare say all this is Hum, and that all will come back; but indeed we die many deaths before we die, and I am almost sick when I think that such a hold as I had of you is gone. I have friends, but some of 'em are changed. Marriage, or some circumstance, rises up to make them not the same. But I felt sure of you. And that last token you gave me of expressing a wish to have my name joined with yours, you know not how it affected me: like a legacy.

God bless you in every way you can form a wish. May He give you health, and safety, and the accomplishment of all your objects, and return you again to us, to gladden some fireside or other (I suppose we shall be moved from the Temple). I will nurse the remembrance of your steadiness and quiet, which used to infuse something like itself into our nervous minds. Mary called you our ventilator. Farewell, and take her best wishes and mine.

Good bye,

C. L.

## LETTER

TO MANNING.

Dec. 25th, 1815.

Dear old friend and absentee,—This is Christmas-day 1815 with us; what it may be with you I don't know, the 12th of June next year perhaps; and if it should be the consecrated season with you, I don't see how you can keep it. You have no turkeys; you would not desecrate the festival by offering up a withered Chinese bantam, instead of the savoury grand Norfolkian holocaust, that smokes all around my nostrils at this moment from a thousand firesides. Then what puddings have you? Where will you get holly to stick in your churches, or churches to stick your dried tea-leaves (that must be the substitute) in? What memorials you can have of the holy time, I see not. A chopped missionary or two may keep up the thin idea of Lent and the wilderness; but what standing evidence have you of the Nativity?—'tis our rosy-cheeked, homestalled divines, whose faces shine to the tune of *unto us a child*; faces fragrant with the mince-pies of half a century, that alone can authenticate the cheerful mystery—I feel, I

feel my bowels refreshed with the holy tide—my zeal is great against the unedified heathen. Down with the Pagodas—down with the idols—Ching-chong-fo—and his foolish priesthood! Come out of Babylon, O my friend! for her time is come, and the child that is native, and the Proselyte of her gates, shall kindle and smoke together! And in sober sense what makes you so long from among us, Manning? You must not expect to see the same England again which you left.

Empires have been overturned, crowns trodden into dust, the face of the western world quite changed: your friends have all got old—those you left blooming—myself (who am one of the few that remember you) those golden hairs which you recollect my taking a pride in, turned to silvery and grey. Mary has been dead and buried many years—she desired to be buried in the silk gown you sent her. Rickman, that you remember active and strong, now walks out supported by a servant-maid and a stick. Martin Burney is a very old man. The other day an aged woman knocked at my door, and pretended to my acquaintance; it was long before I had the most distant cognition of her; but at last together we made her out to be Louisa, the daughter of Mrs. Topham, formerly Mrs. Morton, who had been Mrs. Reynolds, formerly Mrs. Kenney, whose first husband was Holcroft, the dramatic writer of the last century. St. Paul's church is a heap of ruins; the Monument isn't half so high as you knew it, divers parts being successively taken down which the ravages of time had rendered dangerous; the horse at Charing Cross is gone, no one knows whither,—and all this has taken place while you have been settling whether Ho-hing-tong should be spelt with a — or a —. For aught I see you

reliques, my friend, as fast as you can, and come to your old home. I will rub my eyes and try to recognise you. We will shake withered hands together, and talk of old things—of St. Mary's Church and the barber's opposite, where the young students in mathematics used to assemble. Poor Crisp, that kept it afterwards, set up a fruiterer's shop in Trumpington-street, and for aught I know, resides there still, for I saw the name up in the last journey I took there with my sister just before she died. I suppose you heard that I had left the India House, and gone into the Fishmongers' Almshouses over the bridge. I have a little cabin there, small and homely; but you shall be welcome to it. You like oysters, and to open them yourself; I'll get you some if you come in oyster time. Marshall, Godwin's old friend, is still alive, and talks of the faces you used to make.

Come as soon as you can.

C. LAMB.

## LETTER

TO MANNING.

Dec. 26th, 1815.

Dear Manning,—Following your brother's example, I have just ventured one letter to Canton, and am now hazarding another (not exactly a duplicate) to St. Helena. The first was full of unprobable romantic fictions, fitting the remoteness of the mission it goes upon; in the present I mean to confine myself nearer to truth as you come nearer home. A correspondence with the uttermost parts of the earth necessarily involves in it some heat of fancy; it sets the brain agoing; but I can think on the half-way house tranquilly. Your friends, then, are not all dead

borne writing so long. But it is such a forlorn hope to send a scrap of paper straggling over wide oceans. And yet I know when you come home, I shall have you sitting before me at our fire-side just as if you had never been away. In such an instant does the return of a person dissipate all the weight of imaginary perplexity from distance of time and space! I'll promise you good oysters. Cory is dead, that kept the shop opposite St. Dunstan's, but the tougher materials of the shop survive the perishing frame of its keeper. Oysters continue to flourish there under as good auspices. Poor Cory! But if you will absent yourself twenty years together, you must not expect numerically the same population to congratulate your return which wetted the sea-beach with their tears when you went away. Have you recovered the breathless stone-staring astonishment into which you must have been thrown upon learning at landing that an Emperor of France was living in St. Helena? What an event in the solitude of the seas! like finding a fish's bone at the top of Plinlimmon; but these things are nothing in our western world. Novelties cease to affect. Come and try what your presence can.

God bless you.—Your old friend, C. LAMB.

## VI RETIREMENT AND DEATH

As years went by Lamb's duties at the East India House became more and more irksome. By 1825 he had a salary of £700 a year, and at last he determined to give up his post. The story of his liberation is given in letters to various friends, and in one of his essays, the *Superannuated Man*, which appeared in the *London Magazine* for May, 1825, and in the *Last Essays of Elia* (1833).

### LETTER

TO MANNING.

[Not dated. ? February, 1825.]

My dear M.,—You might have come inopportunately a week since, when we had an inmate. At present and for as long as *ever* you like, our castle is at your service. I saw Tuthill yesternight, who has done for me what may

“To all my nights and days to come,  
Give solely sovran sway and masterdom.”

But I dare not hope, for fear of disappointment. I cannot be more explicit at present. But I have it under his own hand, that I am *non-capacitated* (I cannot write it in-) for business. O joyous imbecility! Not a susurrations of this to *anybody*!

Mary's love.

C. LAMB.

## LETTER

TO WORDSWORTH.

Colebrook Cottage, 6 April, 1825.

Dear Wordsworth, I have been several times meditating a letter to you concerning the good thing which has befallen me, but the thought of poor Monkhouse came across me. He was one that I had exulted in the prospect of congratulating me. He and you were to have been the first participators, for indeed it has been ten weeks since the first motion of it. Here I am then after 33 years slavery, sitting in my own room at 11 o'Clock this finest of all April mornings a freed man, with £441 a year for the remainder of my life, live I as long as John Dennis, who outlived his annuity and starved at 90. £441, i.e. £450, with a deduction of £9 for a provision secured to my sister, she being survivor, the Pension guaranteed by Act Georgii Tertii, &c.

I came home for ever on Tuesday in last week. The incomprehensibleness of my condition overwhelm'd me. It was like passing from life into Eternity. Every year to be as long as three, i.e. to have three times as much real time, time that is my own, in it! I wandered about thinking I was happy, but feeling I was not. But that tumultuousness is passing off, and I begin to understand the nature of the gift. Holydays, even the annual month, were always uneasy joys: their conscious fugitiveness—the craving after making the most of them. Now, when all is holyday, there are no holydays. I can sit at home in rain or shine without a restless impulse for walkings. I am daily steadying, and shall soon find it as natural to me to be my own master, as it has been irksome to have

had a master. Mary wakes every morning with an obscure feeling that some good has happened to us.

Leigh Hunt and Montgomery after their release-ments describe the shock of their emancipation much as I feel mine. But it hurt their frames. I eat, drink, and sleep sound as ever. I lay no anxious schemes for going hither and thither, but take things as they occur. Yesterday I excursed 20 miles, to day I write a few letters. Pleasuring was for fugitive play days: mine are fugitive only in the sense that life is fugitive. Freedom and life co-existent.

At the foot of such a call upon you for gratulation, I am ashamed to advert to that melancholy event. Monkhouse was a character I learned to love slowly, but it grew upon me, yearly, monthly, daily. What a chasm has it made in our pleasant parties! His noble friendly face was always coming before me, till this hurrying event in my life came, and for the time has absorpt all interests. In fact it has shaken me a little. My old desk companions with whom I have had such merry hours seem to reproach me for removing my lot from among them. They were pleasant creatures, but to the anxieties of business, and a weight of possible worse ever impending, I was not equal. Tuthill and Gilman gave me my certificates. I laughed at the friendly lie implied in them, but my sister shook her head and said it was all true. Indeed this last winter I was jaded out, winters were always worse than other parts of the year, because the spirits are worse, and I had no daylight. In summer I had daylight evenings. The relief was hinted to me from a superior power, when I poor slave had not a hope but that I must wait another 7 years with Jacob—and lo! the Rachel which I coveted is bro't—to me.

Communicate my news to Southey, and beg his pardon for my being so long acknowledging his kind present of the "Church," which circumstances I do not wish to explain, but having no reference to himself, prevented at the time. Assure him of my deep respect and friendliest feelings.

Divide the same, or rather each take the whole to you—I mean you and all yours. To Miss Hutchinson I must write separate. What's her address? I want to know about Mrs. M.

Farewell! and end at last, long selfish Letter!

C. LAMB.

### THE SUPERANNUATED MAN

*Sera tamen respexit*

*Libertas. VIRGIL.*

A Clerk I was in London gay.—O'KEEFE.

IF peradventure, Reader, it has been thy lot to waste the golden years of thy life—thy shining youth—in the irksome confinement of an office; to have thy prison days prolonged through middle age down to decrepitude and silver hairs, without hope of release or respite; to have lived to forget that there are such things as holidays, or to remember them but as the prerogatives of childhood; then, and then only, will you be able to appreciate my deliverance.

It is now six and thirty years since I took my seat at the desk in Mincing-lane. Melancholy was the transition at fourteen from the abundant play-time, and the frequently-intervening vacations of school days, to the eight, nine, and sometimes ten hours' a-day attendance at a counting-house. But time

partially reconciles us to anything. I gradually became content—doggedly contented, as wild animals in cages.

It is true I had my Sundays to myself; but Sundays, admirable as the institution of them is for purposes of worship, are for that very reason the very worst adapted for days of unbending and recreation. In particular, there is a gloom for me attendant upon a city Sunday, a weight in the air. I miss the cheerful cries of London, the music, and the ballad-singers—the buzz and stirring murmur of the streets. Those eternal bells depress me. The closed shops repel me. Prints, pictures, all the glittering and endless succession of knacks and gewgaws, and ostentatiously displayed wares of tradesmen, which make a weekday saunter through the less busy parts of the metropolis so delightful—are shut out. No book-stalls deliciously to idle over—No busy faces to recreate the idle man who contemplates them ever passing by—the very face of business a charm by contrast to his temporary relaxation from it. Nothing to be seen but unhappy countenances—or half-happy at best—of emancipated 'prentices and little tradesfolks, with here and there a servant maid that has got leave to go out, who, slaving all the week, with the habit has lost almost the capacity of enjoying a free hour; and livelily expressing the hollowness of a day's pleasuring. The very strollers in the fields on that day look anything but comfortable.

But besides Sundays I had a day at Easter, and a day at Christmas, with a full week in the summer to go and air myself in my native fields of Hertfordshire. This last was a great indulgence; and the prospect of its recurrence, I believe, alone kept me up through the year, and made my durance tolerable.

But when the week came round, did the glittering phantom of the distance keep touch with me? or rather was it not a series of seven uneasy days, spent in restless pursuit of pleasure, and a wearisome anxiety to find out how to make the most of them? Where was the quiet, where the promised rest? Before I had a taste of it, it was vanished. I was at the desk again, counting upon the fifty-one tedious weeks that must intervene before such another snatch would come. Still the prospect of its coming threw something of an illumination upon the darker side of my captivity. Without it, as I have said, I could scarcely have sustained my thralldom.

Independently of the rigours of attendance, I have ever been haunted with a sense (perhaps a mere caprice) of incapacity for business. This, during my latter years, had increased to such a degree, that it was visible in all the lines of my countenance. My health and my good spirits flagged. I had perpetually a dread of some crisis, to which I should be found unequal. Besides my daylight servitude, I served over again all night in my sleep, and would awake with terrors of imaginary false entries, errors in my accounts, and the like. I was fifty years of age, and no prospect of emancipation presented itself. I had grown to my desk, as it were; and the wood had entered into my soul.

My fellows in the office would sometimes rally me upon the trouble legible in my countenance; but I did not know that it had raised the suspicions of any of my employers, when, on the 5th of last month, a day ever to be remembered by me, L——, the junior partner in the firm, calling me on one side, directly taxed me with my bad looks, and frankly inquired the

cause of them. So taxed, I honestly made confession of my infirmity, and added that I was afraid I should eventually be obliged to resign his service. He spoke some words of course to hearten me, and there the matter rested. A whole week I remained labouring under the impression that I had acted imprudently in my disclosure; that I had foolishly given a handle against myself, and had been anticipating my own dismissal. A week passed in this manner, the most anxious one, I verily believe, in my whole life, when on the evening of the 12th of April, just as I was about quitting my desk to go home (it might be about eight o'clock) I received an awful summons to attend the presence of the whole assembled firm in the formidable back parlour. I thought, now my time is surely come, I have done for myself, I am going to be told that they have no longer occasion for me. L—, I could see, smiled at the terror I was in, which was a little relief to me,—when to my utter astonishment B—, the eldest partner, began a formal harangue to me on the length of my services, my very meritorious conduct during the whole of the time (the deuce, thought I, how did he find out that? I protest I never had the confidence to think as much). He went on to descant on the expediency of retiring at a certain time of life (how my heart panted!) and asking me a few questions as to the amount of my own property, of which I have a little, ended with a proposal, to which his three partners nodded a grave assent, that I should accept from the house, which I had served so well, a pension for life to the amount of two-thirds of my accustomed salary—a magnificent offer! I do not know what I answered between surprise and gratitude, but it was understood that I accepted their

proposal, and I was told that I was free from that hour to leave their service. I stammered out a bow, and at just ten minutes after eight I went home—for ever. This noble benefit—gratitude forbids me to conceal their names—I owe to the kindness of the most munificent firm in the world—the house of Boldero, Merryweather, Bosanquet, and Lacy.

*Esto perpetua!*

For the first day or two I felt stunned, overwhelmed. I could only apprehend my felicity; I was too confused to taste it sincerely. I wandered about, thinking I was happy, and knowing that I was not. I was in the condition of a prisoner in the old Bastile, suddenly let loose after a forty years' confinement. I could scarce trust myself with myself. It was like passing out of Time into Eternity—for it is a sort of Eternity for a man to have his Time all to himself. It seemed to me that I had more time on my hands than I could ever manage. From a poor man, poor in Time, I was suddenly lifted up into a vast revenue; I could see no end of my possessions; I wanted some steward, or judicious bailiff, to manage my estates in Time for me. And here let me caution persons grown old in active business, not lightly, nor without weighing their own resources, to forego their customary employment all at once, for there may be danger in it. I feel it by myself, but I know that my resources are sufficient; and now that those first giddy raptures have subsided, I have a quiet home-feeling of the blessedness of my condition. I am in no hurry. Having all holidays, I am as though I had none. If Time hung heavy upon me, I could walk it away; but I do *not* walk all day long, as I used to do in those old transient

holidays, thirty miles a day, to make the most of them. If Time were troublesome, I could read it away, but I do *not* read in that violent measure, with which, having no Time my own but candle-light Time, I used to weary out my head and eyesight in by-gone winters. I walk, read or scribble (as now) just when the fit seizes me. I no longer hunt after pleasure; I let it come to me. I am like the man

————— That's born, and has his years come to him,  
In some green desert.

"Years!" you will say! "what is this superannuated simpleton calculating upon? He has already told us, he is past fifty."

I have indeed lived nominally fifty years, but deduct out of them the hours which I have lived to other people, and not to myself, and you will find me still a young fellow. For *that* is the only true Time, which a man can properly call his own, that which he has all to himself; the rest, though in some sense he may be said to live it, is other people's time, not his. The remnant of my poor days, long or short, is at least multiplied for me three-fold. My ten next years, if I stretch so far, will be as long as any preceding thirty. 'Tis a fair rule-of-three sum.

Among the strange fantasies which beset me at the commencement of my freedom, and of which all traces are not yet gone, one was, that a vast tract of time had intervened since I quitted the Counting House. I could not conceive of it as an affair of yesterday. The partners, and the clerks, with whom I had for so many years, and for so many hours in each day of the year, been closely associated—being suddenly removed from them—they seemed as dead to me. There is a fine passage, which may serve to illustrate this fancy,

in a Tragedy by Sir Robert Howard, speaking of a friend's death :

————— 'Twas but just now he went away ;  
I have not since had time to shed a tear ;  
And yet the distance does the same appear  
As if he had been a thousand years from me.  
Time takes no measure in Eternity.

To dissipate this awkward feeling, I have been fain to go among them once or twice since; to visit my old desk-fellows—my co-brethren of the quill—that I had left below in the state militant. Not all the kindness with which they received me could quite restore to me that pleasant familiarity, which I had heretofore enjoyed among them. We cracked some of our old jokes, but methought they went off but faintly. My old desk; the peg where I hung my hat, were appropriated to another. I knew it must be, but I could not take it kindly. D——I take me, if I did not feel some remorse—beast, if I had not—at quitting my old compeers, the faithful partners of my toils for six and thirty years, that smoothed for me with their jokes and conundrums the ruggedness of my professional road. Had it been so rugged then after all? or was I a coward simply? Well, it is too late to repent; and I also know, that these suggestions are a common fallacy of the mind on such occasions. But my heart smote me. I had violently broken the bands betwixt us. It was at least not courteous. I shall be some time before I get quite reconciled to the separation. Farewell, old cronies, yet not for long, for again and again I will come among ye, if I shall have your leave. Farewell, Ch[ambers], dry, sarcastic, and friendly! Do[dwell], mild, slow to move, and gentlemanly! Pl[umley], officious to do, and to volunteer, good

services!—and thou, thou dreary pile, fit mansion for a Gresham or a Whittington of old, stately House of Merchants; with thy labyrinthine passages, and light-excluding, pent-up offices, where candles for one half the year supplied the place of the sun's light; unhealthy contributor to my weal, stern fosterer of my living, farewell! In thee remain, and not in the obscure collection of some wandcring bookseller, my "works!" There let them rest, as I do from my labours, piled on thy massy shelves, more MSS. in folio than ever Aquinas left, and full as useful! My mantle I bequeath among yc.

A fortnight has passed since the date of my first communication. At that period I was approaching to tranquillity, but had not reached it. I boasted of a calm indeed, but it was comparative only. Something of the first flutter was left; an unsettling sense of novelty; the dazzle to weak eyes of unaccustomed light. I missed my old chains, forsooth, as if they had been some necessary part of my apparel. I was a poor Carthusian, from strict cellular discipline suddenly by some revolution returned upon the world. I am now as if I had never been other than my own master. It is natural to me to go where I please, to do what I please. I find myself at eleven o'clock in the day in Bond-street, and it seems to me that I have been sauntering there at that very hour for years past. I digress into Soho, to explore a book-stall. Methinks I have been thirty years a collector. There is nothing strange nor new in it. I find myself before a fine picture in a morning. Was it ever otherwise? What is become of Fish-street Hill? Where is Fenchurch-street? Stones of old Mincing-lanc, which I have worn with my daily pilgrimage for six and thirty

years, to the footsteps of what toil-worn clerk are your everlasting flints now vocal? I indent the gayer flags of Pall Mall. It is Change time, and I am strangely among the Elgin marbles. It was no hyperbole when I ventured to compare the change in my condition to a passing into another world. Time stands still in a manner to me. I have lost all distinction of season. I do not know the day of the week, or of the month. Each day used to be individually felt by me in its reference to the foreign post days; in its distance from, or propinquity to, the next Sunday. I had my Wednesday feelings, my Saturday nights' sensations. The genius of each day was upon me distinctly during the whole of it, affecting my appetite, spirits, &c. The phantom of the next day, with the dreary five to follow, sate as a load upon my poor Sabbath recreations. What charm has washed that Ethiop white? What is gone of Black Monday? All days are the same. Sunday itself—that unfortunate failure of a holyday, as it too often proved, what with my sense of its fugitiveness, and over-care to get the greatest quantity of pleasure out of it—is melted down into a week day. I can spare to go to church now, without grudging the huge cantle which it used to seem to cut out of the holyday. I have Time for everything. I can visit a sick friend. I can interrupt the man of much occupation when he is busiest. I can insult over him with an invitation to take a day's pleasure with me to Windsor this fine May-morning. It is Lucretian pleasure to behold the poor drudges, whom I have left behind in the world, carking and caring; like horses in a mill, drudging on in the same eternal round—and what is it all for? A man can never have too much Time to himself, nor too little to do. Had I a

little son, I would christen him NOTHING-TO-DO; he should do nothing. Man, I verily believe, is out of his element as long as he is operative. I am altogether for the life contemplative. Will no kindly earthquake come and swallow up those accursed cotton-mills? Take me that lumber of a desk there, and bowl it down

As low as to the fiends.

I am no longer . . . . ., clerk to the Firm of, &c. I am Retired Leisure. I am to be met with in trim gardens. I am already come to be known by my vacant face and careless gesture, perambulating at no fixed pace, nor with any settled purpose. I walk about; not to and from. They tell me, a certain *cum dignitate* air, that has been buried so long with my other good parts, has begun to shoot forth in my person. I grow into gentility perceptibly. When I take up a newspaper, it is to read the state of the opera. *Opus operatum est*. I have done all that I came into this world to do. I have worked task work, and have the rest of the day to myself.

---

Unfortunately his time of retirement was not entirely delightful. He missed his regular occupation, and his sister's malady attacked her more and more frequently.

When he was released from the East India House he was living in Colebrook Cottage, Colebrook Row, Islington.

From Colebrook Row, Lamb removed in 1827 to Enfield, and thence in 1833 to the little cottage at Edmonton in which he died. During the last three and a half years at Enfield, he and his sister were boarded by a couple of the name of Westwood.

## LETTER

TO WORDSWORTH.

[P.M. January 22, 1830.]

And is it a year since we parted from you at the steps of Edmonton Stage? There are not now the years that there used to be. The tale of the dwindled age of men, reported of successional mankind, is true of the same man only. We do not live a year in a year now. 'Tis a punctum stans. The seasons pass us with indifference. Spring cheers not, nor winter heightens our gloom, Autumn hath foregone its moralities, they are hey-pass re-pass [as] in a show-box. Yet as far as last year occurs back, for they scarce show a reflex now, they make no memory as heretofore—'twas sufficiently gloomy. Let the sullen nothing pass. Suffice it that after sad spirits prolonged thro' many of its months, as it called them, we have cast our skins, have taken a farewell of the pompous troublesome trifle calld housekeeping, and are settled down into poor boarders and lodgers at next door with an old couple, the Baucis and Baucida of dull Enfield. Here we have nothing to do with our victuals but to eat them, with the garden but to see it grow, with the tax gatherer but to hear him knock, with the maid but to hear her scolded. Scot and lot, butcher, baker, are things unknown to us save as spectators of the pageant. We are fed we know not how, quietists, confiding ravens. We have the otium pro dignitate, a respectable insignificance. Yet in the self condemned obliviousness, in the stagnation, some molesting yearnings of life, not quite kill'd, rise, prompting me that there was a London, and that I was of that old Jerusalem. In dreams I am in Fleet-

detestable. A garden was the primitive prison till man with promethean felicity and boldness luckily sinn'd himself out of it. Thence followed Babylon, Nineveh, Venice, London, haberdashers, goldsmiths, taverns, playhouses, satires, epigrams, puns—these all came in on the town part, and the thither side of innocence. Man found out inventions. From my den I return you condolence for your decaying sight, not for anything there is to see in the country, but for the miss of the pleasure of reading a London newspaper. The poets are as well to listen to, anything high may, nay must, be read out—you read it to yourself with an imaginary auditor—but the light paragraphs must be glid over by the proper eye, mouthing mumbles their gossamery substance. 'Tis these trifles I should mourn in fading sight. A newspaper is the single gleam of comfort I receive here, it comes from rich Cathay with tidings of mankind. Yet I could not attend to it read out by the most beloved voice. But your eyes do not get worse, I gather. O for the collyrium of Tobias inclosed in a whiting's liver, to send you with no apocryphal good wishes! The last long time I heard from you, you had knock'd your head against something. Do not do so. For your head (I do not flatter) is not a nob, or the top of a brass nail, or the end of a ninepin—unless a Vuleanian hammer could fairly batter a Recluse out of it, then would I bid the smirch'd god knock and knock lustily, the two-handed skinker. What a nice long letter Dorothy has written! Mary must squeeze out a line *proprîâ manu*, but indeed her fingers have been incorrigibly nervous to letter writing for a long interval. 'Twill please you all to hear that, tho' I fret like a lion in a net, her

present health and spirits are better than they have been for some time past : she is absolutely three years and a half younger, as I tell her, since we have adopted this boarding plan.

Our providers are an honest pair, dame Westwood and her husband—he, when the light of prosperity shined on them, a moderately thriving haberdasher within Bow Bells, retired since with something under a competence, writes himself *pareel gentleman*, hath borne parish offices, sings fine old sea songs at three-score and ten, siglis only now and then when he thinks that he has a son on his hands about 15, whom he finds a difficulty in getting out into the world, and then cheeks a sigh with muttering, as I once heard him prettily, not meaning to be heard, “I have married my daughter, however,”—takes the weather as it comes, outsides it to town in severest season, and a’ winter nights tells old stories not tending to literature, how comfortable to author-rid folks! and has *one anecdote*, upon which and about forty pounds a year he seems to have retired in green old age. It was how he was a *rider* in his youth, travelling for shops, and once (not to baulk his employer’s bargain) on a sweltering day in August, rode foaming into Dunstable upon a *mad horse* to the dismay and expostulatory wonderment of inn-keepers, ostlers &c., who declared they would not have bestrid the beast to win the Darby. Understand the creature gall’d to death and desperation by gad flies, cormorants winged, worse than beset Inachus’ daughter. This he tells, this he brindles and burnishes on a’ winter’s eves, ’tis his star of set glory, his rejuvenescence to deseant upon. Far from me be it (*dii avertant*) to look a gift story in the mouth, or

cruelly to surmise (as those who doubt the plunge of Curtius) that the inseparate conjuncture of man and beast, the centaur-phenomenon that staggerd all Dunstable, might have been the effect of unromantic necessity, that the horse-part carried the reasoning, willy-nilly, that needs must when such a devil drove, that certain spiral configurations in the frame of Thomas Westwood unfriendly to alighting, made the alliance more forcible than voluntary. Let him enjoy his fame for me, nor let me hint a whisper that shall dismount Bellerophon. Put case he was an involuntary martyr, yet if in the fiery conflict he buckled the soul of a constant haberdasher to him, and adopted his flames, let Accident and He share the glory! You would all like Thomas Westwood.



How weak is painting to describe a man! Say that he stands four feet and a nail high by his own yard measure, which like the Sceptre of Agamemnon shall never sprout again, still you have no adequate idea, nor when I tell you that his dear hump, which I have favord in the picture, seems to me of the buffalo—indicative and repository of mild qualities, a budget of kindnesses, still you have not the man. Knew you old Norris of the Temple, 60 years ours and our father's friend, he was not more natural to us than this old W. the acquaintance of scarce more weeks. Under his roof now ought I to take my rest, but that back-looking ambition tells me I might

yet be a Londoner. Well, if we ever do move, we have encumbrances the less to impede us: all our furniture has faded under the auctioneer's hammer, going for nothing like the tarnish'd frippery of the prodigal, and we have only a spoon or two left to bless us. Clothed we came into Enfield, and naked we must go out of it. I would live in London shirtless, bookless. Henry Crabb is at Rome, advices to that effect have reach'd Bury. But by solemn legacy he bequeath'd at parting (whether he should live or die) a Turkey of Suffolk to be sent every succeeding Xmas to us and divers other friends. What a genuine old Bachelor's action! I fear he will find the air of Italy too classic. His station is in the Hartz forest, his soul is *Bego'ethed*. Miss Kelly we never see; Talsourd not this half year; the latter flourishes, but the exact number of his children, God forgive me, I have utterly forgotten, we single people are often out in our count there. Shall I say two? . . . We see scarce anybody. . . .

Can I cram loves enough to you all in this little O?  
Excuse particularizing. C. L.

---

Thomas Hood, the humorist and poet, had presented Lamb with a large and handsome dog, which, as it became rather troublesome, Lamb gave to P. G. Patmore. The following letter makes inquiry about the dog.

## LETTER

TO P. G. PATMORE.

Mrs. Leishman's, Chace, Enfield,  
September, 1827.

Dear Patmore—Excuse my anxiety—but how is Dash? (I should have asked if Mrs. Patmore kept her rules, and was improving—but Dash came upper-

most. The order of our thoughts should be the order of our writing.) Goes he muzzled, or *aperto ore*? Are his intellects sound, or does he wander a little in *his* conversation? You cannot be too careful to watch the first symptoms of incoherence. The first illogical snarl he makes, to St. Luke's with him! All the dogs here are going mad, if you believe the overseers; but I protest they seem to me very rational and collected. But nothing is so deceitful as mad people to those who are not used to them. Try him with hot water. If he won't lick it up, it is a sign he does not like it. Does his tail wag horizontally or perpendicularly? That has decided the fate of many dogs in Enfield. Is his general deportment cheerful? I mean when he is pleased—for otherwise there is no judging. You can't be too careful. Has he bit any of the children yet? If he has, have them shot, and keep *him* for curiosity, to see if it was the hydrophobia. They say all our army in India had it at one time—but that was in *Hyder-Ally's* time. Do you get paunch for him? Take care the sheep was sane. You might pull out his teeth (if he would let you), and then you need not mind if he were as mad as a Bedlamite. It would be rather fun to see his odd ways. It might amuse Mrs. Patmore and the children. They'd have more sense than he! He'd be like a Fool kept in the family, to keep the household in good humour with their own understanding. You might teach him the mad dance set to the mad howl. *Madge Owl-et* would be nothing to him. 'My, how he capers!' [*In the margin is written:*] One of the children speaks this. [*Three lines here are erased.*] What I scratch out is a German quotation from Lessing on the bite of rabid animals; but, I remember, you don't read German.

But Mrs. Patmore may, so I wish I had let it stand. The meaning in English is—"Avoid to approach an animal suspected of madness, as you would avoid fire or a precipice &c." which, I think, is a sensible observation. The Germans are certainly profounder than we.

If the slightest suspicion arises in your breast, that all is not right with him (Dash), muzzle him, and lead him in a string (common pack-thread will do; he don't care for twist) to Hood's, his quondam master, and he'll take him in at any time. You may mention your suspicion or not, as you like, or as you think it may wound or not Mr. H.'s feelings. Hood, I know, will wink at a few follies in Dash, in consideration of his former sense. Besides, Hood is deaf, and if you hinted any thing, even to one he would not hear you. Besides, you will have discharged your conscience, and laid the child at the right door, as they say.

We are dawdling our time away very idly and pleasantly, at a Mrs. Leishman's, Chace, Enfield, where, if you come a-hunting, we can give you cold meat and a tankard. Her husband is a tailor; but that, you know, does not make her one. I knew a jailor (which rhymes), but his wife was a fine lady.

Let us hear from you respecting Mrs. Patmore's regimen. I send my love in a — to Dash.

C. LAMB.

[On the outside of the letter was written:—]

Seriously, I wish you would call on Hood when you are that way. He's a capital fellow. I sent him a couple of poems—one ordered by his wife, and written to order; and 'tis a week since, and I've not heard from him. I fear something is the matter.

Omitted within.

Our kindest remembrance to Mrs. P.

In July, 1834, died Coleridge, one of Lamb's oldest and dearest friends, and as other friends died Lamb began to feel more and more alone in the world. When quite a young man (in 1798) he had written a poem which was curiously prophetic of his last few months of life :

### THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES.

Where are they gone, the old familiar faces?  
I had a mother, but she died, and left me,  
Died prematurely in a day of horrors—  
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have had playmates, I have had companions,  
In my days of childhood, in my joyful school-days,  
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have been laughing, I have been carousing,  
Drinking late, sitting late, with my bosom cronies,  
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I loved a love once, fairest among women;  
Closed are her doors on me, I must not see her—  
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have a friend, a kinder friend has no man;  
Like an ingrate, I left my friend abruptly;  
Left him, to muse on the old familiar faces.

Ghost-like, I paced round the haunts of my childhood.  
Earth seemed a desert I was bound to traverse,  
Seeking to find the old familiar faces.

Friend of my bosom, thou more than a brother,  
Why wert not thou born in my father's dwelling?  
So might we talk of the old familiar faces—

That none of them have died, and so far they have left me,  
And none are taken from me; all are departed,  
All, all are gone, the old faithful ones.

[This is the last of the letters which were written by the author to Mrs. Dyer.]

—

Our day is December of the year in which Coleridge died, as Lamb was walking along the London road from Edmonton, he stumbled over a stone and fell, slightly wounding his leg. On the 22nd of the same month he wrote his last letter, which is given below, and on the same day cryopelax set in. On the 27th he died, "murmuring in his last moments the names of his dearest friends."

## LETTER

TO MRS. DYER.

Dec. 22nd, 1834.

Dear Mrs. Dyer,—I am very uneasy about a Book which I either have lost or left at your house on Thursday. It was the book I went out to fetch from Miss Rutnam's, while the tripe was frying. It is called Phillip's Theatrum Poetarum; but it is an English book. I think I left it in the parlour. It is Mr. Cary's book, and I would not lose it for the world. Pray, if you find it, book it at the Swan, Snow Hill, by an Edmonton stage immediately, directed to Mr. Lamb, Church-street, Edmonton, or write to say you cannot find it. I am quite anxious about it. If it is lost, I shall never like tripe again.

With kindest love to Mr. Dyer and all,

Yours truly,

C. Lamb.

Mary Lamb survived her brother nearly thirteen years. She died in May, 1847, and was buried beside him.

In 1827 Lamb wrote for William Upcott, the autograph collector, a short autobiographical sketch, which was published, after his death, in the *New Monthly Magazine* for April, 1835.

### AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

CHARLES LAMB, born in the Inner Temple, 10th February, 1775, educated in Christ's Hospital. Afterwards a clerk in the Accountants' office, East India House; pensioned off from that service, 1825, after thirty-three years' service, is now a gentleman at large, can remember few specialities in his life worth noting except that he once caught a swallow flying (*teste sua manu*); below the middle stature, cast of face slightly Jewish, with no Judaic tinge in his complexional religion, stammers abominably, and is therefore more apt to discharge his occasional conversation in a quaint aphorism or a poor quibble than in set and edifying speeches; has consequently been libelled as a person always aiming at wit, which, as he told a dull fellow that charged him with it, is at least as good as aiming at dulness; a small eater but not drinker; confesses a partiality for the production of the juniper berry, was a fierce smoker of tobacco, but may be resembled to a volcano burnt out, emitting only now and then a casual puff. Has been guilty of obtruding upon the Public a Tale in Prose, called "*Rosamund Gray*," a dramatic sketch named "*John Woodvil*," a "*Farewell Ode to Tobacco*," with sundry other poems and light prose

matter, collected in two slight crown octavos, and pompously christened his Works, tho' in fact they were his Recreations, and his true works may be found on the shelves of Leadenhall Street, filling some hundred folios. He is also the true Elia whose essays are extant in a little volume published a year or two since; and rather better known from that name without a meaning, than from anything he has done or can hope to do in his own. He also was the first to draw the Public attention to the old English dramatists in a work called "Specimens of English Dramatic Writers, who lived about the time of Shakspeare," published about fifteen years since. In short, all his merits and demerits to set forth would take to the end of Mr. Upcott's book, and then not be truly told. He died <sup>1</sup>

18

much lamented.

Witness his hand, CHARLES LAMB.

10th April, 1827.

<sup>1</sup>To any Body—Please to fill up these blanks.

## NOTES.

(L added to a note indicates that it is taken from Mr. E. V. Lucas' edition of Lamb's Work : C that it comes from Mr. W. J. Craig's edition of the Essays of Elia in the "Temple Classics.")

### THE OLD BENCHERS OF THE INNER TEMPLE. (Pp. 2-16.)

For the name Elia, see p. 147 : Naiades, water-nymphs : nice, here means 'imperceptible' : Marvell, poet, satirist, and M.P. for Hull in Charles II.'s reign : gothic, grotesque : exploded (lit. hissed off), rejected : the winged horse, the badge of the Inner Temple : rappee, a dark brown snuff : chamber practice, giving private advice as a lawyer : Lovel is Lamb's father : Miss Blandy, poisoned her father (a lawyer) in 1751, was hanged in 1752 : North Cray, in Kent : Hio currus, etc., here were his chariot and his arms : John Elwes (1714-89), a famous miser : flapper, prompter (see p. 147) : Swift (author of 'Gulliver's Travels') and Matthew Prior, both wrote humorous poetry : Bayes, a character (intended to ridicule first, Davenant, and later, Dryden) in the 'Rehearsal' (1671), a play by the second Duke of Buckingham : Peter Plerson, brother of the Susan Pierson already mentioned (p. 8) : our great philanthropist, Howard, the prison reformer : Daines Barrington, a correspondent of Gilbert White (see 'Natural History of Selborne') : Friar Bacon, Roger Bacon (1214-1294) : edge, atch, the second spelling is right, though not for the reason Lamb gives ; (it is from O.Fr. nache : buttock) : Michael Angelo's Moses, the statue in the Sistine Chapel, the head of which bears two small horns : little Goshen, Exodus x. 21-23 : reducing, reductive, bringing back : R.N., Randall Norris, sub-treasurer of the Inner Temple (p. 23) : Urban's obituary, in 'the Gentleman's Magazine,' the editor of which always bears the name 'Sylvanus Urban' : Hooker is the author of the 'Ecclesiastical Polity,' and Selden, the John Selden who wrote 'Mare Clausum' (1635). The former was Master of the Temple (1585-91) ; the latter was a student in the Inner Temple : illustrate, glorify.

### CAPTAIN STARKEY. (Pp. 17-22.)

passage leading from Fetter Lane, Bond Stables (L) : punctually-washed, washed perfectly clean : Cato is the tragedy by Addison.

### CHRIST'S HOSPITAL FIVE AND THIRTY YEARS AGO. (Pp. 22-38.)

present . . . sub-treasurer (see above) : Banyan days, vegetarian days : caro equina, horse flesh : rotten-roasted or rare, over-roasted

or underdone: griskin, lean part of a loin of bacon: the Tishbite, Elijah: C. came from Ottery St. Mary in Devon, not from Calne: lions in the Tower, until 1831 there was a menagerie in the Tower: Callgula's minion, the horse which he made a Roman consul: Verrio, 'a mythological house-painter,' came from Naples, died 1707: the Trojan is Aeneas: Bedlam, the lunatic asylum in South London. The name is a corruption of Bethlehem: watchet-woods, blue clothes: Dante, the Italian poet. In his 'Divine Comedy' some of the spirits in hell are punished by horrible mutilations: Ultima Supplicia, extreme punishments: Rousseau [the French philosopher, 1712-78] and John Locke [the English philosopher, 1632-1704] advocated 'mixing the useful and the agreeable' in education: Phaedrus, the Latin fabulist: Xenophon, Plato, Greek writers: the Samite, Pythagoras, the Greek philosopher, who is said to have forbidden his pupils to speak until they had heard his lectures for five years: Ululantes, howlers: Tartarus, the infernal regions: serannel (see p. 148): Flaccus, Horace, the Roman poet: Terence, the Roman dramatist: vis, strength: rabidus furor, mad rage: the Debates, those of Parliament: Grecians, members of the senior form on the classical side at Christ's Hospital: Cicero De Amicitia, the book by Cicero 'concerning friendship': regni novitas, newness of the rule: Middleton was the first Bishop of Calcutta: Jewel, an Elizabethan theologian: Mirandula, a famous young Italian scholar (died 1494, aged 31): Jamblichus and Plotinus, Greek philosophers: Pindar, Greek poet: Grey Friars, Christ's Hospital; the school was built on the site of a monastery of the Grey Friars: Nireus formosus, beautiful Nireus: Hertford, the preparatory school for Christ's Hospital.

#### LETTER TO COLERIDGE, SEPT. 27, 1796. (Pp. 40, 41.)

The Mr. Norris is probably not the same as Randall Norris: Coleridge had written a volume of poems, to which Lamb contributed four sonnets.

#### MACKERY END IN HERTFORDSHIRE. (Pp. 42-48.)

The rash King's offspring, Jephthah's daughter: Burton, author of the 'Anatomy of Melancholy' (1621), one of Lamb's favourite books: the Religio Medici (1642), another of Lamb's favourites, was written by Sir Thomas Browne: Margaret Newcastle, the Duchess of Newcastle (1624-73) wrote a life of her husband, and an autobiography: B. F. is Barron Field, then in Australia; see the Essay 'Distant Correspondents' (Essays of Elia).

#### DREAM-CHILDREN; A REVERIE. (Pp. 48-53.)

Norfolk should be Hertfordshire: John L—, or James Elia, is Lamb's elder brother. He died in October, 1821: Lamb's Grandmother, Mary Field, had been housekeeper at Blakesware, in Hertfordshire, the house of the Plumers: great-house, the principal house

in a district: 'Allico W——n' is supposed to have been a Miss Ann Simmons who married a Mr. Bartram: Lethe, the river of Hades that had to be passed by spirits which came to visit the earth.

### LETTER TO WORDSWORTH, JAN. 30, 1801. (Pp. 54-56.)

Joanna, a poem by Wordsworth describing the effect of laughter echoing among the mountains: D, Dorothy Wordsworth, sister of the poet: Barbara Lewthwaite (see p. 149): the play, John Woodvil, a play written by Lamb. Wordsworth did not care much for it.

### LETTER TO MANNING, FEB. 24, 1805. (Pp. 56-58.)

Manning (see p. 91): dexterously replaced by a salamander, means 'browned over again with a salamander'; a salamander is a thin piece of iron used (when heated) for browning pastry, etc.: David, a French painter: Titian and Correggio, Italian painters: St. Mary's, a church in Cambridge. Crisp lived opposite to it.

### LETTER TO COLERIDGE, MARCH 9, 1822. (Pp. 59, 60.)

Edipus put out his own eyes: Owen was Lamb's landlord in Russell Street: Coleridge was living at Highgate: tame villatic things (see p. 149).

### A DISSERTATION UPON ROAST PIG. (Pp. 61-70.)

M. is Manning (see p. 91): Confucius, the Chinese philosopher: Locke, the English philosopher (1632-1704): mundus edibilis, the edible world: princeps obsoniorum, chief of viands: amor immunditiæ, love of dirt: præludium, prelude: sapor, flavours: excoriatio, galls: nice, fastidious: intenerating, softening: St. Omer's, a French Jesuit College; Lamb, of course, was never there: shalots, a kind of onion.

### MY FIRST PLAY. (Pp. 70-76.)

Godfather F., Francis Fielde: Mary Linley, the singer: Brinsley Sheridan, the playwright, manager of Drury Lane Theatre: Seneca, the Roman philosopher and tragedian: Varro, a Roman writer on husbandry: nonpareils, a sort of apple: pro, for: Aurora, the dawn: Artaxerxes, an opera by Arne: beldams, old women: St. Denys, patron saint of Paris; he carried his head in his hand for the distance of two miles, after being beheaded!: Lady of the Manor, a comic opera: Lun's Ghost, Lun was the name under which Rich had played in the pantomime (L): Way of the World, the play by Congreve: Mrs. Siddons, the actress: Isabella, in Southerne's Fatal Marriage.

## BARBARA S——. (Pp. 76-83.)

Young Arthur in 'King John': had rallied Richard, etc., in Richard III., iii. 1: principia, beginnings: Mrs. Porter, should be Mrs. Siddons: punctuality, exactness.

## OLD CHINA. (Pp. 83-90.)

The hays, an old English dance; Cathay, the old name for China: Hyson, a kind of China tea: speciosa miracula, bright wonders: Beaumont and Fletcher, Elizabethan dramatists, and joint authors of a number of plays: corbeau, dark blue: Leonarda da Vinci, an Italian painter: Colnaghi, a London printseller: Piscator... Trout Hall in Walton's 'Angler' (chapter ii.): Battle of Hexham, Surrender of Calais, plays by George Colman, junior: Rosalind in 'As You Like It': Viola in 'Twelfth Night': R—— is Nathan M. Rothschild.

## LETTER TO MANNING, AUG. 24, 1800. (Pp. 91-94.)

Pliny (the younger), the Latin letter-writer: Trismegist, the title applied to Hermes, the Egyptian philosopher, means 'thrice greatest': *merae nugae*, sheer nonsense: in rerum natura, among existing things: perieranick, brain: Longinus, the Greek critic: Theocritus, Greek pastoral poet: Mason, a friend of the poet Gray: Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, author of the 'Poetics,' the foundation of literary criticism: Beaumont, etc., are Elizabethan dramatists: Dodsley's collection is a reprint of old English plays: Rowe, a later dramatist (1674-1718): Johnson's Lives, i.e. of the poets.

## LETTER TO MANNING, DEC. 27, 1800. (Pp. 94-97.)

phrenesis, frenzy: Bloomfield, author of the 'Farmer's Boy,' 1800: the other Professor, Godwin, who wrote a play called 'Abbas, King of Persia': Bethlehem College, i.e. Bedlam (p. 141): Fénelon, etc., a reference to Godwin's 'Political Justice,' in which he considers the comparative worth of the persons of Fénelon, a chambermaid, and his mother, supposing them to have been present at the fire at Cambrai and only one of them to be saved (L): Deo volente, etc., God willing, the devil unwilling: crush a cup, drink a cup: St. Mary's lighthouse, St. Mary's Church in Cambridge: sensorium, nervous system, here 'brain'.

## LETTER TO MRS. HAZLITT, NOV. 1823. (Pp. 97-98.)

our house, in Colebrook Row; the New River ran by it: Mary Hazlitt, niece of essayist.

## AMICUS REDIVIVUS. (Pp. 98-104.)

ho who bore Anchises, Aeneas carried his father Anchises from burning Troy: Monoculus, one-eyed: cannabls, hemp, used for making

ropes, etc. : the Middleton's Head, a public house : Sir Hugh Middleton (d. 1631), constructed the New River : Trumpington, the street in Cambridge : Pembroke, the Cambridge college of that name : tremor cordis, trembling of spirit : Sir Hugh, in the 'Merry Wives of Windsor' : the Abyssinian traveller, James Bruce : Cam, Dyer was a Cambridge scholar : Euripus, a strait into which Aristotle was said to have thrown himself because he could not discover the cause of its irregular tides : dipper, Baptist : Clarence, in 'Richard III.' : Christian, in the 'Pilgrim's Progress' : Palinurus, the helmsman who was drowned in a storm while steering Aeneas and his followers to Italy : watchet, blue : Lazari, people (like Lazarus) brought from the dead : Pluto, god of the lower world : Charon, the ferryman of the world below : Arion was sailing to Corinth with the prizes he had won in some musical contests. The sailors meditated murdering him to get the treasures, and after begging in vain for his life he obtained permission to play once more on the cithara. The dolphins, loving music, came round the ship, and when he threw himself into the sea, one of them bore him safely to land : Machaon, physician to the Greeks when they attacked Troy : Dr. Hawes, founder of the Royal Humane Society : Ophelia, in 'Hamlet' : the grim feature is Death : Tantalus was condemned to be immersed in water up to the neck and to be ever thirsty ; when he tried to drink, the water fled his lips ; and he suffered other similar punishments : Markland, a great classical scholar and an old Christ's Hospital boy : Tyrwhitt, the Chaucerian scholar : the sweet lyrist, Gray, the poet : *Gratum tantum vidit*, Gray he only saw : Askew, a physician and classical scholar : Aesculapius, the god of medicine.

#### LETTER TO MANNING, FEB. 19, 1803. (Pp. 104-106.)

Prester John, the Emperor of Tartary : Sir John Mandeville's *Travels*, a medieval compilation passing under that name : David Hartley, the metaphysician : parts, abilities : the story of Cambuscan is in the 'Squire's Tale' : smouchy, smutehey : Riekman, a friend who became Clerk to the House of Commons : the captain, James Burney.

#### LETTER TO MANNING, MAY 10, 1806. (Pp. 107-109.)

Martin Burney, son of Capt. Burney (see above) : Monkey Louisa, Louisa Martin : Kalmuks, a Mongol tribe : Holcrofts, the dramatist, and his daughters : Phillips, probably the brother-in-law of Burney : Mr. Dawe, a painter ; became R.A. in 1814 : twenty of Shakespeare's plays, these were the 'Tales from Shakespeare' : *Quam homo*, how much one man excels another ! : hum, nonsense.

#### LETTER TO MANNING, DEC. 25, 1815. (Pp. 109-112.)

Norfolcian, Manning came from Norfolk : Struldbrugs, creatures in 'Gulliver's Travels,' which had immortality, but not eternal youth : Maclaurin and Euler, mathematicians : Godwin, the philosopher (see p. 143) : Coleridge had been meditating an epic on the 'Wanderings of Cain' some years before this.

LETTER TO MANNING, DEC. 26, 1815. (Pp. 112-114.)

Fanny, Fanny Holcroft: Priscilla, Priscilla Lloyd, who married a brother of Wordsworth: Robert Lloyd, died 1811: St. Dunstan's, a church in Fleet Street. -

LETTER TO MANNING, FEB. 1825. (P. 115.)

Sir George Tuthill, a physician and an early friend of Lamb's: imbecility, weakness (*not* insanity): susurratation, whisper.

LETTER TO WORDSWORTH, APRIL 6, 1825. (Pp. 116-118.)

Monkhouse, a friend of Lamb, and relation of Wordsworth. He had just died: Gilman, the doctor who cared for Coleridge in his later years: the Church, a book by Southey: Miss Hutchinson, Wordsworth's sister-in-law.

THE SUPERANNUATED MAN. (Pp. 118-127.)

Throughout this essay Lamb changed names of persons and places: they have been correctly given in the foregoing letter. words of course, formal phrases: *esto perpetua*, may it last for ever: Gresham, founded the Royal Exchange: Aquinas, a medieval theologian: Carthusian, the monks of this order lived in solitary confinement: indent, stroll about: the Elgin marbles, (sculptures from the Parthenon in Athens) had recently been taken to the British Museum: Black Monday, Easter Monday, so called because of the great storm which occurred on that day in 1360: Lucretian pleasure, to watch the troubles of another man (see p. 152): Retired Leisure, (see p. 152): *cum dignitate*, with dignity; from the phrase *otium cum dignitate*, leisure with dignity: *opus operatum est*, my work is finished.

LETTER TO WORDSWORTH, JAN. 22, 1830. (Pp. 128-135.)

punctum stans, a standing point: heypass repass, words used by conjurers when bidding things to move: Baucis and Baucida, should be Philemon and Baucis? (L): *otium pro dignitate*, leisure in exchange for dignity: Eloisa . . . Paraclete, Abelard, a young theologian, fell in love with his pupil, Eloisa, and married her. They were separated, and after a time Abelard retired to a hermitage, which became a monastery called Paraclete; when he became abbot of St. Gildas-de-Rhuys it passed to Eloisa and a sisterhood: Seven sleepers of Ephesus, seven Christians, who, according to tradition, being immured in a cavern, slept unharmed for nearly 200 years: the Scotch novels, those of Sir Walter Scott: Red Gauntlet appeared in 1824: Prometheus, the protector of mankind against Zeus, brought fire to earth from heaven. Zeus in revenge sent all manner of diseases and sufferings

upon mankind: proper, belonging to the person himself: collyrium of Tobias, Tobias restored his father's sight with the gall of a fish; collyrium means 'eye-salve': the *Recluse*, an unfinished poem by Wordsworth: skinker, tapster (a pun is probably intended): *propria manu*, with her own hand: Bow Bells, the bells of Bow Church, Cheapside: parcel gentleman, half-gentleman: Inachus' daughter, Io, was turned into a cow and tormented by a gadfly: *dii avertant*, may the gods forbid!: Curtius leaped on horseback into a gap which opened in the Roman forum and so saved the city: Bellerophon, the rider of Pegasus, the winged horse: Goethe, the German poet; Crabb Robinson was one of his personal friends: Miss Kelly, the actress (see p. 76): Talfourd, a friend, who afterwards published some of Lamb's letters and wrote an account of his life.

#### LETTER TO P. G. PATMORE, SEPT. 1827. (Pp. 133-135.)

*aperto ore*, the mouth open: St. Luke's, the asylum: Madge Owlet, an old popular name for the owl. Lamb evidently intended a pun; the word is sometimes spelt 'Howlet.' Lessing, the German poet and critic.

#### THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES. (Pp. 136, 137.)

I have a friend, refers to Charles Lloyd or James White (L.): friend of my bosom, perhaps refers to Coleridge.

#### AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH. (Pp. 138, 139.)

*teste sua manu*, witness his hand: complexional, constitutional, natural: the production of the juniper berry is gin: Leadenhall Street, where the East India House was situated: Mr. Upcott's book, probably the album in which Lamb wrote the sketch: the 'Essays of Elia' appeared in 1823, and the *Specimens* in 1808 (see p. 70).

## QUOTATIONS, ETC.

[References to Shakespeare are given from the Globe Edition.]  
G. T. = *Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics*, Second Edition.

### THE OLD BENCHERS OF THE INNER TEMPLE. (Pp. 2-16.)

Elia. The following is a quotation from a letter written by Lamb to his publishers, in 1821. "Poor ELIA the real, (for I am but a counterfeit), is dead. The fact is, a person of that name, an Italian, was a fellow clerk of mine at the South Sea House, thirty (not forty) years ago, when the characters I described there existed [see p. 39] . . . and I having a brother now there, and doubting how he might relish certain descriptions . . . clapt down the name of Elia to it. . . . I went the other day (not having seen him for a year) to laugh over with him at my usurpation of his name, and found him, alas! no more than a name, for he had died of consumption eleven months ago, and I knew not of it."

There when they came . . . Spenser, *Prothalamion*, l. 132 (G. T. p. 49).

Of building strong . . . Probably improvised by Lamb.

Ah! yet doth beauty . . . Shakespeare, *Sonnet* 104.

carved it out quaintly . . . *Henry VI.*, Part III., ii. 5. 24.

what wondrous life . . . Andrew Marvell, *The Garden*, l. 33 (G. T. p. 114).

An Ellsha bear. 2 *Kings*, ii. 23, 4.

Hic currus . . . Cf. Vergil, *Aen.* i. 16, 17.

flapper. Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, Part III. Chapter ii. (Laputa).

"I observed here and there many in the habit of servants, with a blown bladder fastened like a flail to the end of a short stick, which they carried in their hands. In each bladder was a small quantity of dried pease, or little pebbles . . . It seems, the minds of . . . [the Laputians] are so taken up with intense speculations, that they neither can speak, nor attend to the discourses of others, without being roused by some external taction upon the organs of speech and hearing; for which reason, those persons who are able to afford it always keep a flapper . . . in their family. . . . And the business of this officer is, when two or more persons are in company, gently to strike with his bladder the mouth of him who is to speak, and the right ear of him or them to whom the speaker addresseth himself. This flapper is likewise employed diligently to attend his master in his walks, and upon occasion to give him a soft flap on his eyes, because he is always so wrapped up in cogitation, that he is in manifest danger of falling down every precipice, and bouncing his head against every post, and in the streets, of justling others, or being justled himself into the kennel."

would strike . . . Cf. *King Lear*, v. 3. 285.

a remnant most forlorn . . . Probably written by Lamb himself  
 It occurs in his lines, *Written on the day of my aunt's funeral*.  
 as now our stout triumphs . . . Unknown.  
 the omniscient Jackson . . . Boswell's *Johnson* (year 1776).  
 old men covered with a mantle. 1 *Sam.* xxviii. 14.  
 honest chronicler. *Henry VIII.* iv. 2. 72.  
 green and vigorous sonility . . . Vergil, *Aen.* vi. 304.  
 ye yourselves are old. *King Lear*, ii. 4. 194.

## CAPTAIN STARKEY. (Pp. 17-22.)

to what base uses. . . . *Hamlet*, v. i. 223.

CHRIST'S HOSPITAL FIVE AND THIRTY YEARS AGO.  
(Pp. 22-38.)

the Tishbite . . . 1 *Kings*, xvii.  
 waxing fat and kicking . . . *Deut.* xxxii. 15.  
 to feed our mind . . . Vergil, *Aen.* i. 464.  
 'Twas said . . . *Anthony and Cleopatra*, i. 4. 67.  
 watchet-weeds. Collins, *Ode to the Manners*, l. 68.  
 like a dancer. *Anthony and Cleopatra*, iii. 11. 35-6.  
 insolent Greece . . . Ben Jonson, *To the Memory of my Beloved, the*  
*author, Master William Shakespeare*, l. 39.  
 Gideon's miracle. *Judges*, vi. 37, and sec 39. The reference given  
 by Lamb is to Cowley's *Complaint*, stanza 4.  
 playing holiday. 1 *Hen. IV.* i. 2. 227.  
 ululantes. Cf. Vergil, *Aen.* vi. 257.  
 scrannel-pipes. *Lycidas*, l. 124 (*G.T.* p. 72).  
 . . . their lean and flashy songs  
 Grate on their scrannel-pipes of wretched straw, . . .  
 Rex —. Horace, *Satires*, i. 7.  
 tristis severitas. Terence, *Andria*, v. 2.  
 inspicere in patinas. Terence, *Adelphi*, iii. 3.  
 rabidus furor. Catullus, *Atys*, 38.  
 regni novitas. Vergil, *Aen.* i. 563.  
 finding some of Edward's race . . . Prior, *Carmen Seculare*, for the  
 year 1700. Lamb put 'Edward's' for 'Stuart's.' (Edward VI. founded  
 Christ's Hospital.)  
 the wit-combats. From Fuller's *Worthies* (1662), with Coleridge put  
 for Ben Jonson, and C. V. L. for Shakespeare.  
 Nireus formosus. Cf. Homer, *Iliad*, ii. 673.

## LETTER TO COLERIDGE, SEPT. 27, 1796. (Pp. 40, 41.)

the former things are passed away. *Rev.* xxi. 4.

MACKERY END IN HERTFORDSHIRE. (Pp. 42-48.)

rash king's offspring . . . *Judges*, xi. 37.

with a difference. *Hamlet*, iv. 5. 183.

holds Nature more clever. *Gay, Epitaph of Byrds*.

To convince her of God, the good dean did endeavour,

But still in her heart she held nature more clever.

stuff of the conscience. *Othello*, i. 2. 2.

heart of Juno. Ben Jonson, *Epithalamium on the nuptials of Mr. Hieron Weston and Lady Francis Stuart*.

But thou, that didst appear. Wordsworth, *Parson's Visit*.

the meeting of the scriptural cousins. *St. Luke*, i. 40.

DREAM CHILDREN. (Pp. 48-53.)

to be turned into marble. Cf. Milton, *On Shakespeare*, l. 14.

shores of Letha. *Vergil, Aen.* vi. 748-51.

LETTER TO WORDSWORTH, JAN. 30, 1801. (Pp. 54-56.)

Little Barbara Lewthwaite. Wordsworth, *The Pet Lamb*, l. 13.

LETTER TO MANNING, FEB. 24, 1805. (Pp. 56-58.)

you must love him . . . Wordsworth, *The Poet's Epitaph*.

It will be wooed . . . *Paradise Lost*, viii. 503.

was just such another. Cf. *Julius Caesar*, iii. 2. 257.

A DISSERTATION UPON ROAST PIG. (Pp. 61-70.)

tame villatic fowl. Milton, *Samson Agonistes*, l. 1695.

Ere sin could blight. Coleridge, *Epitaph on an Infant*.

for such a tomb . . . Milton, *On Shakespeare*, l. 16.

a bundle of virtues . . . Cf. *All's Well*, iv. 3. 83-7.

give everything. *King Lear*, ii. 4. 253.

rank and guilty garlic. Cf. Horace, *Epodes*, iii. 3.

MY FIRST PLAY. (Pp. 70-76.)

fair Auroras. From the first song in *Artaxerxes*.

a satiric touch. Swift, *On the death of Dr. Swift* (sixth line from end).

He gave the little wealth he had  
To build a house for fools and mad;  
And show'd by one satiric touch  
No nation wanted it so much.

was nourished . . . Cf. Walton, *Complete Angler*, Chapter iv.,  
 grass-hoppers . . . are nourished . . . man knows not how.  
 royal ghost. Cf. *Hamlet*, i. 4. 45.  
 phantom of a voice. Cf. Wordsworth, *To the Cuckoo*.

### OLD CHINA. (Pp. 83-90.)

dancing the hays. Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. 1. 161.  
 speciosa miracula. Horace, *Ars Poetica*, l. 144.  
 Piscator . . . Trout Hall. *Complete Angler*, Chapter ii.  
 a wilderness of Lionardos. Cf. *Merchant of Venice*, iii. 1. 128.  
 lusty brimmers. Cotton, *The New Year*, quoted in Lamb's essay on  
 New Year's Eve.  
 shake the superflux. *King Lear*, iii. 4. 35.  
 coming guest. Pope, *Tr. of Odyssey*, xv. 84.  
 I know not the fathom line. *Henry IV.* i. 3. 204.

### LETTER TO MANNING, AUG. 24, 1800. (Pp. 91-94.)

hasten into the middle of things. Cf. Milton, *Paradise Lost*,  
 Argument to Book I., and Horace; *Ars Poetica*, 148.

### LETTER TO MANNING, DEC. 27, 1800. (Pp. 94-97.)

crush a cup. *Romeo and Juliet*, i. 2. 86.

### LETTER TO MRS. HAZLITT, NOV. 1823. (Pp. 97, 98.)

babbled of guardian angels . . . Cf. *Henry V.* ii. 3. 17, 18.

### AMICUS REDIVIVUS. (Pp. 98-104.)

Where were ye, Nymphs. Milton, *Lycidas*, 50 (*G. T.* p. 70).  
 tremor cordis. *Winter's Tale*, i. 2. 110.  
 good Sir Hugh. *Merry Wives of Windsor*, iii. 1. 17 and foll.  
 and could such spacious virtue. From a poem by John Cleveland,  
 printed in the memorial volume on Edward King, to which Milton  
 contributed *Lycidas*.  
 with Clarence . . . *Richard III.* i. 4. 2 and foll.  
 I behold Christian . . . *Pilgrim's Progress*, near end of Part I.  
 Palinurus. See Vergil, *Aen.* vi. 349-51.  
 to suspend it to the stern god. Horace, *Odes*, i. 5. ll. 13-16.

Ophelia . . . *Hamlet*, iv. 7.

the grim Feature. *Paradise Lost*, x. 279.

Gratum tantum vidit. Cf. Ovid, *Tristia*, iv. 10. 51.

LETTER TO MANNING, FEB. 19, 1803. (Pp. 104-106.)

take hellebore. Horace, *Epistles*, ii. 2. 137.

absolute in all numbers, probably from the address to the Reader in the 1st Folio of Shakespeare, 'absolute in their numbers.' Cf. *Paradise Lost*, viii. 421.

to sit at table. Andrew Marvell, *The Character of Holland*, ll. 23-30.

Yet still his claim the injured ocean laid,  
And oft at leap-frog o'er their steeples played,  
. . . The fish oft-times the burgher dispossessed,  
And sat, not as a meat, but as a guest.

Is the chair empty? *Richard III.* iv. 4. 470.

LETTER TO MANNING, MAY 10, 1806. (Pp. 107-109.)

Quam homo, etc. . . . Terence, *Eunuchus*, ii. 2. 1.

we die many deaths . . . *Julius Caesar*, ii. 2. 32.

whose heads do grow. *Othello*, i. 3. 144, 5.

LETTER TO MANNING, DEC. 25, 1815. (Pp. 109-112.)

like a Struldbrug . . . *Gulliver's Travels*, Part III. Chapter x.

LETTER TO MANNING, FEB. 1825. (P. 115.)

To all my nights and days . . . *Macbeth*, i. 5. 70, 1.

LETTER TO WORDSWORTH, APRIL 6, 1825. (Pp. 116-118.)

101 the Rachel . . . *Genesis*, xxix.

THE SUPERANNUATED MAN. (Pp. 118-127.)

Sera tamen respexit. Vergil, *Ecl.* i. 28.

a clerk I was, etc., from a song said to have been written by George Colman.

the wood had entered . . . Cf. *Psalm* cv. verse 18 (Prayer Book version).

giddy raptures. Cf. Wordsworth, *Tintern Abbey*, l. 86.

that's born and has his years . . . Middleton, *Mayor of Queenborough* (C).

'Twas but just now. Sir Robert Howard, *The Vestal Virgin* (C).

everlasting flints. *Romeo and Juliet*, ii. 6. 17.

I indent . . . Cf. Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis*, 704.

the huge cantle. Cf. *Henry IV.* iii. 1. 100.

It is Lucretian pleasure. Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, ii. ll. 1, 2.

as low as to the fiends. *Hamlet*, ii. 2. 519.

Retired Leisure. Milton, *Il Penseroso*, ll. 49, 50 (*G. T.* p. 121).

## LETTER TO WORDSWORTH, JAN. 22, 1830. (Pp. 128-133.)

man found out inventions. *Proverbs*, viii. 12, and *Eccles.* vii. 29.

sceptre of Agamemnon. *Iliad*, i. 234 and foll.

This little O. *Henry V.*, Prologue to Act i. ll. 12, 13.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Complete editions of Lamb's works are published by

- (1) Messrs. Methuen & Co.: 7 vols. at 7s. 6d. each. Edited by E. V. Lucas.
- (2) Messrs. Macmillan: 6 vols. at 4s. nett each. Edited by Canon Ainger.
- (3) Messrs. Dent & Co.: 12 vols. at 3s. 6d. nett each. Edited by W. Macdonald.

Lives of Charles Lamb have been written by

- (1) E. V. Lucas (Methuen & Co.: 2 vols. 21s. nett).
- (2) Canon Ainger (Macmillan: 1 vol. 4s. nett).

Separate editions of the Essays have been published by

- (1) Messrs. Dent & Co.: 2 vols. 1s. 6d. nett each. Edited by W. J. Craig.
- (2) Messrs. Methuen & Co.: 1 vol. 2s. nett. Edited by E. V. Lucas.
- (3) Messrs. Macmillan: 2 vols. 3s. each. Edited by N. L. Hallward and S. C. Hill. This edition is very fully annotated.

A separate edition of the Letters of Lamb has been published by Messrs. G. Bell and Sons, Ltd.: 2 vols. 3s. 6d. each. - Edited by W. C. Hazlitt. The Letters can also be obtained separately in any of the collected editions of Lamb's works named above.

Hundreds of volumes have been written about Lamb, and innumerable editions of his works have been published. Those mentioned above are probably the most useful.